The Guardian Weekly

Vol 157, No 1
Week ending July 6, 1997

A last hurrah and an empire closes down

Andrew Higgins

WITH A clenched-jaw nod from the Prince of Wales, a last rendition of God Save the Queen, and a wind machine to keep the Union flag flying for a final 16 minutes of indoor pomp, Britain shut down the empire that once encompassed a quarter of the globe.

Nearly five centuries after Vasco de Gama launched an era of European empire-building in Asia, and 50 years after Britain put the process in reverse with independence in India, it took only a quarter of an hour of martial pomp and minutely scripted ceremony on Monday night to end 156 years of British colonial rule in Hong Kong.

At dawn on Tuesday, China stamped its authority on its new possession, when 4,000 troops backed by armoured cars and helicopters crossed into the territory. But the army, struggling to shake off the stigma of the Tiananmen Square massacre, projected a softer image, with many troops wearing ties and white gloves rather than combat gear.

In Beijing, more than 100,000 people gathered in the square to count down the last seconds of British rule, the biggest gathering there since the 1989 massacre, and proclaim the emergence of China as a great power cleansed of colonial shame.

At the formal handover ceremony, Prince Charles bequeathed Britain's last big overseas domain to Jiang Zemin, a former trainee at the Stalin Auto Works in Moscow and now head of the world's last major, albeit zealously capitalist, Communist Party.

The occasion, planned since an accord signed by Margaret Thatcher in 1984, was conducted in English and Mandarin, languages that most people of Cantonese-speaking Hong Kong do not understand — a blunt reminder that, unlike previous acts of imperial retreat, the start of Chinese rule thrusts 6.4 million people into the embrace of a new master sometimes as alien as the departing power. "We shall not forget you, and we shall watch with the closest interest as you embark on this new era of your remarkable history," promised Prince Charles.



Red dawn . . . the Chinese flag is raised for the first time in Hong Kong PHOTO: KIMIMASA MAYAMA

The transfer, completed in a glass-encased hall overlooking the harbour that first attracted the covetous eye of British opium traffickers, climaxed a day of rain and tear-soaked British pageantry, Sino-British summitry, and carefully calibrated discourtesies.

Less than an hour into Chinese rule, as the royal yacht Britannia slipped its moorings, carrying Prince Charles and the 28th and last British governor, Chris Patten, out of Victoria Harbour at the head of a flotilla of British ships bound for Manila, pro-democracy politicians gathered on the balcony of the Legislative Council to protest at China's abolition of Hong Kong's elected assembly.

Throughout the day Britain stressed its own contribution to Hong Kong's prosperity, while China barely acknowledged Britain's presence. "This is a Chinese city, a very Chinese city with British characteristics," said Mr Patten, at a British farewell festival, held next to the Prince of Wales Barracks, now stripped of its name and full of Chinese soldiers. Radio frequencies used by British Armed Forces Radio now only crackle with static.

Chinese leaders arrived by air too late to attend a rain-drenched British farewell festival at sunset and then skipped a British banquet. But in a small but unexpected gesture, Mr Jiang shook the hand of Mr Patten, villified by Beijing as a "sinner for a thousand generations" because of the modest political reforms he introduced.

The British prime minister, Tony Blair, in Hong Kong for barely 12 hours, and the Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, both later stayed away from a Chinese ceremony to swear in a new puppet legislature. It was a civil, correct exchange of property but a far cry from the warmth and passions — quickly followed by bloodshed — that accompanied Britain's exit from India.

While Hong Kong's democrats protested, Chinese leaders swore in their handpicked substitute legislature in a Hong Kong hall redolent of the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. Again, no Cantonese was spoken, with 60 Beijing-selected legislators, the new post-colonial governor, chief executive Tung Chee-hwa, and his senior officials all taking their oaths of office in Mandarin.

The substitute legislature immediately began its first formal session, ready to pass an omnibus law activating a string of legislation, including curbs on protests and the funding of political parties, which had been approved before the hand over.

When Mr Blair met Mr Jiang, earlier in the day, he called for a new start after the squabbles that have dogged Sino-British ties. "We want a relationship based on the 21st century, putting the battles and struggles of the past behind us," he said during a 45-minute meeting. Mr Blair accepted an invitation to visit China. He later left Hong Kong to return to London, avoiding the arrival of Chinese armoured cars, warships and military helicopters.

On Tuesday, Mr Jiang reassured Hong Kong residents that a promised high degree of autonomy would be honoured: "There is no reason to change the 'one country, two systems', Hong Kong people ruling Hong Kong, the high degree of autonomy — all these will be long-term directions [governing Hong Kong]," Mr Jiang said.

Patten has no regrets, page 7
Comment, page 12
Washington Post, page 15

Handover marks full extent of Britain's reach

Alan Rusbridger witnesses the retreat of the old colonial power

NOT a celebration then, not a wake, but a handover; a mundane word to describe the eclipse of an empire that lasted more than 400 years. What began with Drake and the Pilgrim Fathers came to an effective end in a steady haze of warm rain in the shadow of the towering Hong Kong skyline.

The royal yacht Britannia was the backcloth to a ceremony marking what the programme, with literalness if not poetry, called "the end of British administration in Hong Kong".

The VIP guests who had travelled from all parts of the globe to see the pageantry knew in their hearts that it amounted to more than that. Sure, there are other odd rocks and islands to which Britain still clings. But they are nothing to compare with Hong Kong. In handing back Palmerston's "barren rock" along with $60 billion in reserves Britain was marking the final limit of its imperial reach.

The guests, huddling under their blue and yellow umbrellas, saw a gorgeously decorated symbol of the majesty of passing empire in the royal yacht.

The new rulers across the water will have seen something different in both symbolism and scale. If they noticed the vessel at all they will have seen a small, staid yacht, also at the end of her life, comprehensively dwarfed by gleaming capitalist skyscrapers.

That gulf in symbolism was present in the ceremonial as well. The British went out with Nimrod, Hearts of Oak and Noel Coward. The young Chinese children danced a pageant dressed up as little deutschmarks, dollars, mobile phones and circuit boards.

There was a certain dismal symbolism as well in the sudden downpour that greeted the national anthem. The Prince of Wales stepped forward, looking magnificent in his white naval uniform. But his oration was utterly inaudible as the rain hammered on thousands of umbrellas.

And then time stood still, and the crowd froze in unison, the rain briefly forgotten, as history unfolded in front of their eyes and the flags of Britain and Hong Kong were lowered — cue for sodden guests to squelch damply to the nearby air-conditioned conference centre for pre-banquet cocktails.

After shivering over chilled champagne about 4,000 of the VIPs proceeded into a banqueting hall approximately the size of four football pitches. The guests were a strange mixture of the past, the present and the future. There were forgotten faces from history, such as ex-president Julius Nyerere of Tanzania. There was the present generation of leaders, including Tony Blair and Madeleine Albright. And there were the leaders of the future, among them Qian Qichen, the Chinese foreign minister, and William Hague.

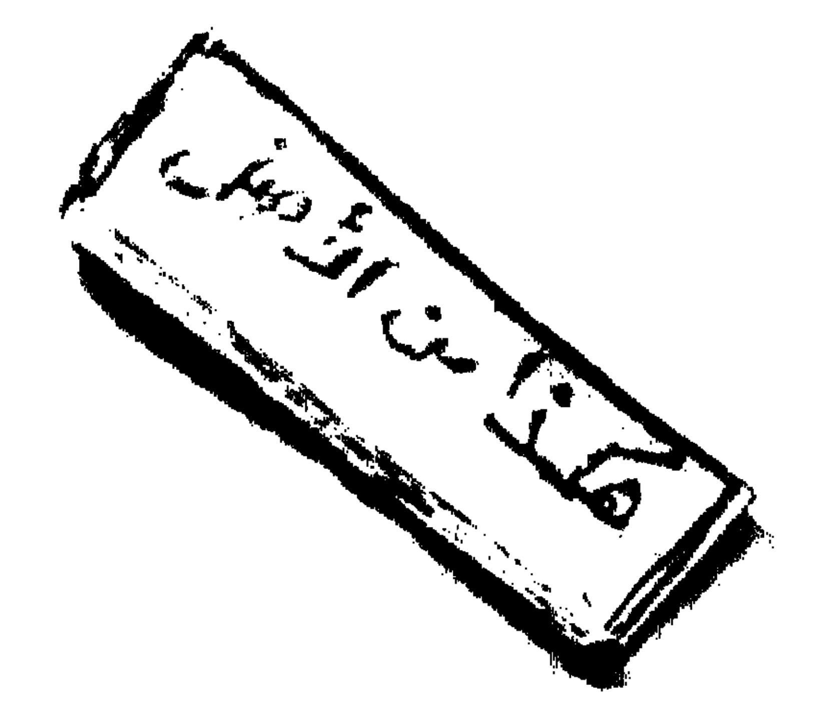
Still wet, the guests moved to yet another hall for the official handover ceremony. This began with a brass band competition between the band of the People's Liberation Army and the Grenadier Guards. The British won this round.

But then came the second round in which the two armies took each other on at drill. The PLA troops in green, blue and white romper suits and leather jackboots were widely felt to have won this round. The overall effect was part comic, part chilling.

Speeches followed. Prince Charles

continued on page 3

Austria	AS30	Malta	50c
Belgium	BF75	Netherlands	G 4.75
Denmark	DK16	Norway	NK 16
Finland	FM 10	Portugal	E300
France	FF 13	Saudi Arabia	SR 8.50
Germany	DM 4	Spain	P 300
Greece	DR 400	Sweden	SK 19
Italy	L 3,000	Switzerland	SF 3.30



American greed comes before needs of the poor

AT THE recent G7 summit in Denver, Mr Clinton boasted that the United States economy is the strongest in the world, and a model for everyone to follow. He believes this is due to the global free market and unrestricted corporate enterprise. Unfortunately, what he did not say about the US and its economy includes:

❑ it is the largest debtor nation of the G7 group;
❑ it has the largest trade deficit of any major nation;
❑ with 5 per cent of the world's population, it consumes about a third of the world's resources, and contributes about a quarter of the world's carbon dioxide emissions;
❑ its aid to poorer countries on a per capita basis is among the lowest of the industrialised nations, and falling;
❑ Congress claims it is necessary to reduce aid to the poor, the sick, the unemployed and legal migrants.

This record is consistent with American opposition to European proposals to have specific targets for reducing carbon dioxide emissions and protecting forests.

At the World Environmental Conference in New York that followed, the environmental problems were clearly identified, together with actions to halt and reverse the environmental deterioration which concerns us all. These include:

❑ redistribution of wealth and economic power;
❑ reduction in consumption in the rich nations.

The real problem is that these actions are not compatible with the global market and unrestricted corporate enterprise. Rather they require increasing interventions and control by democratic governments which reflect and follow the needs and concerns of people and not corporate welfare, pursuit of economic growth at any costs and private greed.

This has major implications for the domestic policies and actions of governments, to ensure they are compatible with their world responsibilities. How can the US promote better health services in the Third World when 40 million Americans cannot afford health insurance?

American critics of the EU initiatives say that their effect would be to hurt the US economy, but that is what this is all about. Is America saying to the poorer nations: "Do as we say, but not as we do?"

It is to be hoped that the British Labour government will take a lead and respond to the challenge. If not, who will?
J A Smith,
Le Douhet, France

Arms dealing and the minister

JONATHAN Aitken's explanation of how his Ritz hotel bill was paid was based on an implausible mixture of complex movements, happenstance and forgetfulness (Former UK minister faces perjury inquiry, June 29). It bears a striking resemblance to his explanation of how he did not know that a company of which he was a director was illegally shipping arms to Iran via Singapore.

Aitken's explanation has always been rejected by a former colleague at the company. Now that he is understood to be a calculating liar, perhaps we should give greater weight to his colleague's view. By lying about his hotel expenses, the burden of proof regarding his arms-dealing activities has shifted.
Clive Bates,
London

THE Aitken trial is not the first in which a closed-down Hotel Bristol has proved crucial. In Stalin's 1936 Moscow show trial of the Bolshevik oppositionists, evidence was presented that the accused had met Trotsky's son, Leon Sedov, during late 1932 in the Hotel Bristol in Copenhagen, where they received Trotsky's instructions on a campaign of terror and sabotage.

Sedov and other Trotskyists outside the USSR published evidence that the Hotel Bristol had closed down in 1917 and been demolished. In that instance, of course, public demolition of falsified evidence did nothing to save the lives of the 16 accused.
J J Plant,
London

WHAT a spectacular vindication for those who saw Jonathan Aitken as Conservative party leadership material.
Peter Lack,
London

Drug companies' true loyalties

MORE than the "cost" is involved in denial of useful Aids treatments to patients in the Third World (June 15). No one but the manufacturer knows what it costs to produce the drugs; the rest of us only know the price, which is unilaterally set by the patent holders.

As long as drug firms can expect insurers and governments to pay any figure they pull from the air, they will continue to price the drugs at thousands of dollars per patient per year. When products reach normal production levels, manufacturing costs are probably a tiny fraction of that, but aggregate global profits would be sharply reduced by a price affordable in the Third World.

The drug companies would rather kill off Third World Aids patients than miss the opportunity to exploit First World insurers. They have a legal obligation to maximise shareholder profits, not to save lives.
Art Hilgart,
Kalamazoo, Michigan, USA

A formula to annoy F1 fans

I WAS interested to read that Bernie Ecclestone, who controls international television revenues from Formula One racing, has almost doubled his pay to $87 million a year (Sports Diary, June 15). One must congratulate him on his business acumen in achieving such a marvellous pay increase.

However, as one who has watched Formula One freely on television for the past 30 years or so, this year, as a result of Mr Ecclestone's desire to maximise profits and auction his "product" off to the highest bidder, I have not seen a single Grand Prix.

In hijacking a global sport watched by millions and selling "his" product off to the highest pay-and-view cable or satellite channels, he has denied the vast majority of motor racing fans — who through principle or by economic necessity do not wish to subscribe to pay-television — the chance to watch their favourite sport.

I thought that the European Commission was drawing up guidelines to safeguard the free, terrestrial, television broadcasting of sporting events. If it has, this net does not seem to extend to Formula One.
Jess Artem,
Santa Cruz de Tenerife,
Canary Islands, Spain

NICHOLAS Fraser's discussion about the comparative quality of television channels and services (A new moronism, June 22) seems to me to be as sensible as smokers discussing the merits of cigarettes with different levels of tar.
Martin N Foggo,
Lower Hutt, New Zealand

Gunning for an unhealthy trade

IT IS good to see that MPs have (over)-reacted to the Dunblane massacre by banning handguns. Hundreds of thousands of people, including disproportionately high numbers of children, are slain annually with weapons supplied by British companies to oppressive regimes and criminal bands.

This represents the largest and most profitable of British industries although not by any means the largest contributor to the British exchequer. Electrical torture equipment, the most sophisticated in the world, is manufactured in and marketed from Glasgow.

But it is not only in Islamic countries that this equipment is used on prisoners, although some of them may be the most guilty of widespread usage on children. Throughout scores of countries, favoured trading standards notwithstanding, democrats deplore the fact that the "Made in Britain" stamp is synonymous with weapons, shackles and torture. The international decline in Britain's prestige has not been without reason.
Ron Westerman,
Bayreuth, Germany

Human face of the Taliban

PAMELA Collett alludes to the isolation and alienation of the Taliban from Afghan society, and particularly women (June 22).

I had an opportunity to see the other side of the coin while recently in Afghanistan. Returning to the capital Kabul from the province of Logar (a trip which would have been most hazardous for men, women and children before the *pax Talibanica*), I was stopped by a young Talib at an official check-post.

"Do you see those women and children walking ahead?" He pointed to a group in the distance. "Please give them a lift to Benhissar [a village on the outskirts of Kabul]. It's up to you, but you will receive a great reward from God if you do so."

The Taliban may not be perfect. But they are human, and they have mothers, sisters, cousins and aunts like anyone else.
Jan Mohammad,
Peshawar, Pakistan

Briefly

ONE of the many things that the McLibel trial established is that the conditions of both battery hens and broiler chickens involve the birds suffering (McDonald's wins hollow victory, June 29).

The Protection of Birds Act 1954 makes it illegal for birds to be kept in cages that prevent them from stretching their wings freely. However, in a blatant example of profits being put first, poultry are excepted from this part of the Act.

The McLibel verdict found that McDonald's was "culpably responsible" for the cruelty involved in rearing these birds. Any individual who buys chicken or eggs that are not free-range is just as much to blame.
Richard Mountford,
Birmingham

I HAVE just received a parcel from England, decorated with postage stamps displaying second world war fighter/bomber aircrafts, all heroically depicted. How tasteless and offensive for my friends here.

Do the designers of postage stamps never stop to consider the political impact of their creations? Will Britain ever manage to grow out of this narcissistic glorification of war, or emerge from her myopic island mentality to realise that she has neighbours?
Nigel Ruddock,
Langen, Germany

I ALWAYS enjoy Martin Walker's column. However, I was distressed by his comments on the "sex scandals" in the US military and the changing attitudes to sex in US society, which seem to blur the distinction between adultery and rape (High command and low morals, June 15).

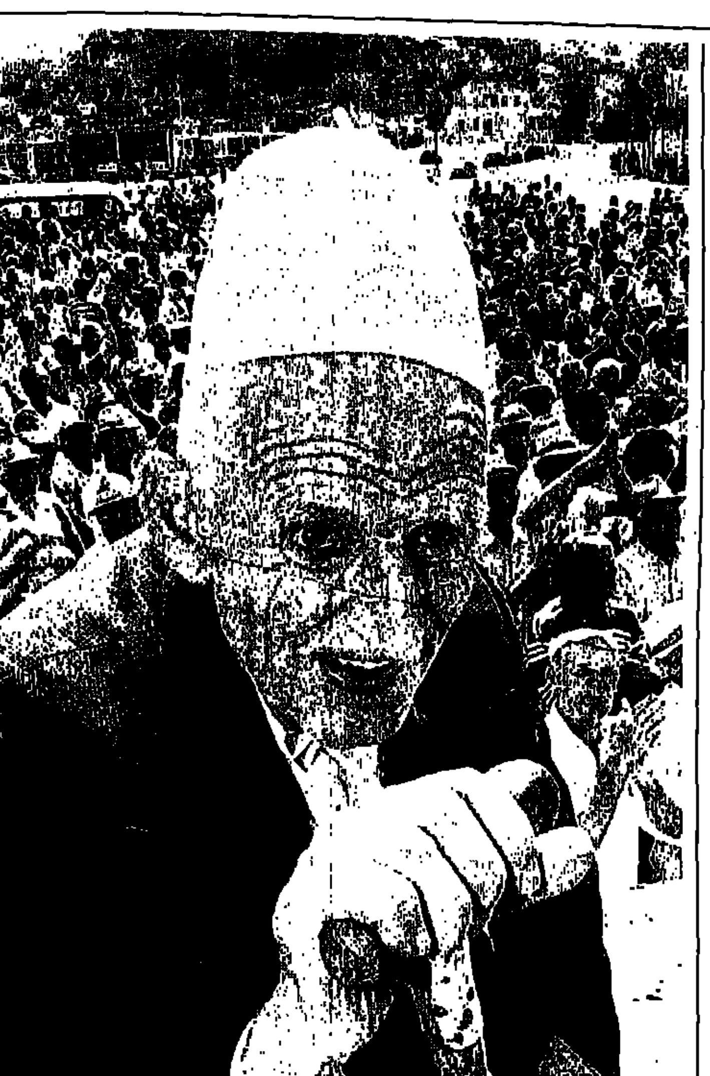
I have no quarrel with his insinuation that the puritanical view of sex is juvenile and hypocritical. However, one major component of the "sex in the military" story is rape — the rape of trainees and junior officers by their "superiors." This is not an issue of puritanism, or sexuality, but of power, control and violence.
R D Taylor,
Winnipeg, Canada

THE British tobacco lobby has consistently argued that its advertising only encourages brand switching and does not increase consumption. If that were really the case, it should be arguing for a ban since it would have no effect on demand while reducing its costs by £58 million (advertising spend) a year.
(Prof) Neil Kay,
University of Strathclyde, Glasgow

SURELY this "windfall prophet tax" is a radical assault on Britain's sybil liberties?
Timothy Poston,
Singapore

The Guardian Weekly
July 6, 1997 Vol 157 No 1

Annual subscription rates are £49 United Kingdom; £55 Europe inc. Eire, USA and Canada; £63 Rest of World.
Letters to the Editor and other editorial correspondence to: The Guardian Weekly, 75 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3HQ.
Fax 44-171-242-0985 (UK: 0171-242 0985)
e-mail: weekly@guardian.co.uk


An elderly man joins thousands of Albanians at a rally in Vlore celebrating the Socialists' election success PHOTO: OLEG POPOV

Berisha bows to election defeat

Jonathan Steele in Tirana

DESERTED by Western governments which once backed him, President Sali Berisha of Albania conceded defeat following last Sunday's snap general election and hinted that he would resign soon.

Fatos Nano, who was freed from jail by rebels in March, claimed his Socialist party had the necessary two-thirds majority in the new parliament to abolish the executive presidency and set the country on the road to full privatisation and a market economy.

The Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, which oversaw the election, endorsed [...] day's vote as "adequate and acceptable" and said that it provided a foundatio[n] for a stable democracy after [...] turmoil.

T[...] for the Socialists [...] turnaround only [...] er the country [...] chy and looting [...] gions controlled [...] public salvation [...] minals.

[...] atic switch [...] first time [...] ar that a [...] has [...] an [...] in W[...] since [...] reform [...] been o[...] touted i[...]

But ear[...] would be a [...] rated as he [...]ian. The doubts became stronger after he used fraud and intimidation to win the parliamentary election in May last year.

When an extension of his mandate was pushed through the rubber-stamp parliament in early spring, Western diplomats boycotted his inauguration.

The country's plunge into lawlessness following the collapse of fraudulent pyramid schemes in March led to international pressure for new elections, the release of the Socialist leaders and the dispatch of a European protection force.

The United States and key European governments were reassured by Mr Nano's [...] although he made unrealistic promises in the election campaign that he would compensate investors in the pyramid schemes.

Mr Nano declared victory at a press conference, basing his claim on reports from party officials at the local counts. He said he had won outright 63 of the 115 seats and Mr Berisha's Democratic party had won seven seats. Allies of the Socialists won a further 10.

By the time Mr Berisha conceded defeat, the election commission had not released any official results. The delay aroused fears that he or sections of the armed forces might be pressing the commission to fiddle [the] figures or claim that violence [...] a fair poll.

The Week

TWO Russian cosmonauts and a British-born Nasa astronaut prepared for an uncomfortable stay aboard Mir, the Russian space station orbiting Earth, after it was hit by a runaway supply ship and lost 30 per cent of its power. It will be days before repair materials arrive.

SLAVKO Dokmanovic, a suspect in the massacre of more than 200 people in the Croatian town of Vukovar in 1991, was arrested by agents of the international war crimes tribunal.

BERTIE AHERN became the Irish republic's prime minister at the head of a minority [...] Sinn Fein's first sitting MP.

CHARLES HAUGHEY, the former Irish prime minister, has admitted for the first time that he received $2.2 million from the stores multi-millionnaire Ben Dunne "as a matter of probability", but did not know at the time the identity of the donor.

NIKE recalled a range of sports shoes after a dispute with the US Islamic community over a logo that was said to resemble "Allah" written in Arabic script.

TURKISH secularist Mesut Yilmaz took over the post of prime minister from the outgoing Necmettin Erbakan, bringing [...] down on Turkey's [...] government.

[...] PEAL against [...] quittal of Malawi's former dictator Dr Hastings Banda and two other men for the murder in 1983 of three cabinet ministers and an MP opened in the country's supreme court.

THE seeds of a new ruling dynasty were planted in Russia when President Boris Yeltsin officially put his daughter, Tatyana Dyachenko, on the Kremlin payroll as his image adviser.

EAST Timor guerrilla leader David Alex has died, aged 60, after being captured by Indonesian forces.

MORE than 200 soldiers and rebels were killed in northern Sri Lanka, where troops are fighting Tamil Tiger separatists in an attempt to open a vital road, the defence ministry said.

A SKYDIVER in Florida who plunged 12,000 feet after his parachute failed to open survived when his instructor used his body to break their 180mph fall. The instructor died.

A BRITISH radiologist invited to work in an Australian hospital three years ago has been refused permanent residency because his young daughter has cerebral palsy.

Final retreat from empire

Continued from page 1
spoke — audibly this time — and impressed with his charmingly veiled hints about monitoring the months to come.

President Jiang Zemin followed with a speech which reminded some of the older Labour MPs present of a Blackpool party conference ca. 1981. It was rewarded with well drilled clapping from the Chinese side of the hall and apathetic silence from the British.

The Union flag — kept buoyant by clever wind jets concealed in the pole — came down shortly before midnight to stony glares from the British politicians on the stage. In contrast with the drenched ceremonies of the afternoon it was a strangely unmoving moment.

The real emotion of the night took place on the dockside, where a handful of people gathered to see Britannia off on her last imperial departure. Chris Patten, fighting back tears, hugged old friends and then followed Prince Charles up the gangplank.

Within minutes the boat had cast off and was heading towards the South China Sea to the ebbing and incongruous strains of Rule Britannia.

Fifty years ago in August Pandit Nehru celebrated a similar moment with Prince Charles's mentor, Louis Mountbatten. He told his people: "At the stroke of midnight while the world sleeps India will wake to life and freedom." In Hong Kong no one could feel such certainty. It was possible to feel hope. But it was also possible to feel foreboding.

Mobutu's shadow lo[...]

Scott Straus in Nairobi

WHEN rioters throw stones at Kenyan police these days, their battle-cry is the name of the man who overthrew Africa's most infamous dictator, Mobutu Sese Seko, in May. "Kabila!" they yell, referring to Laurent Kabila, Zaire's former rebel leader, now president of the Democratic Republic of Congo. "If [Kenyan president Daniel arap] Moi doesn't go we will do to him what Kabila did to Mobutu."

Mobutu's downfall has galvanised a hitherto weak opposition and catapulted Kenya into political crisis. For the first time since he won multi-party elections in 1992, Mr Moi finds himself on the defensive, fighting off an array of reformers, growing dissent within his own party and an increasingly angry and disenfranchised electorate.

"Kenya is now at the edge of a cliff," said Maina Kiai, th[e] [...] of the Kenya Human Rights Co[m]mission. "We need to make a 180-degree turn or else we are going to fall into chaos and instability. That can be done by Moi himself, but the change has to be dramatic."

So far, Mr Moi, one of the last old-school African dictators, has been unwilling to make a dramatic change.

At issue are laws, many left over from the colonial era, governing freedom of assembly, speech and movement. Also in question is legislation that allows the president to appoint government officials directly, decide whether or not a political party can be formed, and detain people without trial.

To date President Moi's only concession to the reform lobby has been to modify the Public Order Act, which restricts freedom of assembly. He made the offer early in June, after police and paramilitary [...] jected s[...] inadequate.

Since then, Mr Moi has vowed to crush dissent, lined Nairobi and other urban areas with troops to prevent pro-reform rallies, and threatened to outlaw any "political" non-government organisations.

As well as the parliamentary opposition, Kenya's mainstream churches and civic organisations are pushing for constitutional change. The churches' involvement has deepened the credibility and seriousness of the opposition's call for reform.

Western and Kenyan analysts believe that Mr Moi will probably call early elections in an attempt to defuse the crisis. No date for the polls has been set, though they must be held before the end of the year. Some fear that he may imprison opposition leaders.

Belgian troops cleared of roasting Somali child

Stephen Bates in Brussels

A BELGIAN court martial's unexpected decision to acquit two paratroopers who were photographed roasting a child over a fire during a United Nations peacekeeping operation in Somalia four years ago provoked shocked criticism in Belgium this week.

The court accepted a claim by the privates, Kurt Coelus and Claude Bart, that they had been playing a game with the child, despite other photographs suggesting a pattern of racism and abuse of civilians by Belgian troops during the international operation known as Restore Hope.

"The court considered there was no evidence that the attack was meant to hurt the child and that it was just a type of playing without violence," the prosecutor, Luc Walleyn, said. Had they been convicted, they would have faced prison sentences of only a month and fines of less than $350 each. Neither of them is still in the paratroops.

The case was one of a number arising from the UN's ill-fated attempt to restore peace in Somalia in 1993. Canadian and Italian troops have also been accused of mistreating Somalis. Some Italians were charged with torturing civilians, applying electrodes to their genitals.

Nine Belgian paratroopers were acquitted of abusing civilians at a court martial two years ago. Other Belgian troops are accused of locking a boy in a metal container in stifling heat without water for two days. The boy died.

● A former Italian soldier who alleged that troops on a UN mission to Somalia had killed unarmed civilians has admitted he lied, a Sicilian prosecutor said.

North Korea agrees to hold peace talks

Tyler Marshall in New York

IN A major step toward bringing a new level of stability to northeastern Asia, North Korea on Monday accepted a basic framework for negotiations that could bring a formal end to the 47-year-old Korean war.

The breakthrough came after seven hours of talks involving senior-level representatives from the United States, South Korea and North Korea meeting at the New York Palace Hotel.

The accepted framework calls for those three participants plus China to meet in New York on August 5 to prepare for full negotiations between the four parties.

"The Democratic People's Republic of Korea [North Korea] will enter the four-party talks," declared the head of North Korea's delegation, vice foreign minister Kim Gye Gwan.

The purpose of the August meeting is to set the time, place and format of formal negotiations.

In Hong Kong, US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright hailed the development. "We welcome the [North Korean] commitment to participate in this historic process," she said in a prepared statement issued in New York. "The successful conclusion of a peace agreement would bring lasting peace and stability to the Korean peninsula and contribute greatly to the peace and stability of the entire region."

Full-scale negotiations, which US and South Korean officials said they expect to follow the August meeting, would attempt to replace the uneasy armistice — which for 44 years has left the Korean peninsula a tense area divided by a 3km wide demilitarized zone — with a permanent peace.

About 37,000 US soldiers are stationed in South Korea to help guarantee that country's security. In addition to a possible peace treaty, negotiations would address a series of so-called "confidence-building measures" aimed at bringing stability to North Korea's shattered economy and bringing one of the world's most isolated and unstable regimes back into the community of nations.

The meeting on Monday followed more than six months of hesitation on the part of communist North Korea, which first agreed to consider entering four-party negotiations shortly after it formally apologised for sending a submarine full of armed commandos into South Korea.

That apology came, as did Monday's diplomatic breakthrough, against the backdrop of North Korea's collapsing economy and reports of serious food shortages and widespread famine. In earlier meetings, North Korea had consistently tried to wrest pledges of massive food aid and US diplomatic recognition as the price of entering full negotiations. — *Los Angeles Times*

… ends in failure

Paul Brown in New York

THE EARTH summit review conference ended in a shambles last week with no clear agreements on its main goals of new aid for developing countries or protecting forests.

The G77 group of developing countries' anger at the industrialised world's breaking the promises for new development aid, made at Rio five years ago, dominated the meeting and effectively prevented any advance on helping the environment.

The only bright spot was an agreement on climate change, in which the industrialised countries agreed that a le… … Kyoto Climate … tion in Japan in December.

Michael Meacher, the British Environment Minister, described the meeting as "a chaotic and disconnecting experience. A lot of blood, sweat and tears has gone into this with not much result, but I think we have inched forward."

Environment groups were dismayed but saw the outcome as the developing world delivering a "bloody nose" to the industrialised countries — effectively barring agreement on the environment before aid and trade deals were agreed.

It is clear that the British government will have an important role with the G7 world economic summit being held in Birmingham next June and with Gordon Brown, the UK Chancellor, organising a conference in London beforehand aimed at making world trade sustainable.

Mr Meacher was not entirely dismayed by the lack of progress. What the Rio process had started was an attempt at a new world order in which the environmental agenda was considered alongside market forces and globalisation. These changes took time and progress had been slow because promises had not been kept.

"The developing world is in a so… and resentful mood becau… promised at R… not bee… … agreements that failed to happen was a worldwide tax on aviation fuel to encourage engine efficiency and cut pollution. The United States opposed new taxes, and oil-producing nations feared loss of revenue and the developing world loss of tourists because of increased prices.

Stephen Nzita, leader of the People's Progressive party in Zaire, said: "If this kind of Earth summit circus continues then the people of Africa will perish.

"We need the rule of law, we need democracy, peace with justice, and we need fair terms of trade so we can develop a proper market economy, then we can protect our environment."

Clinton's speech, page 18



Popocatepetl spews smoke and ash on Monday PHOTO: RAFAEL DURAN

Ash blankets Mexico City

MEXICO'S Popocatepetl volcano sent a cloud of ash and acrid gases over the sprawling metropolis of Mexico City on Monday in its biggest explosion in 70 years.

A mushroom that formed above the crater blew across the city causing a drizzle of dirty black ash that clogged car windscreens and forced the closure of Mexico's main airport.

Authorities urged the city's 18 million residents to stay indoors and close their doors and windows. Those who needed to go outside were advised to wear goggles and a face mask. Some authorities announced a red alert and prepared to evacuate people living near the volcano.

Ash blew mostly eastwards, landing as far away as the Gulf of Mexico port of Veracruz, 260km away.

Experts said "Popo", as the mountain is affectionately known, registered its most violent activity since 1925.

Meanwhile Montserrat officials said on Monday they feared that as many as 20 people were killed last week when a rumbling volcano rained superheated rocks and gas on the Caribbean island.

"It could be as high as 20 [dead]," said Claude Hogan, a spokesman for the British territory's government.

Mr Hogan spoke as new flows of extremely hot rocks and gases from the Soufriere Hills volcano, located in the southern part of the island, set more houses on fire. Deadly pyroclastic flows — fast-moving bursts of 500C volcanic material — devastated seven villages in southern Montserrat last week. — *Reuter*

Drugs '8pc of world trade'

Chris Taylor

THE world's drug trade has grown dramatically over the last decade and is now bigger than international trade in iron and steel and motor vehicles, according to a United Nations report.

The annual turnover in drugs is estimated at $400 billion — about 8 per cent of international trade. By contrast, official development aid totals $69 billion.

The World Drug Report, compiled by the UN international drug control programme, attempts to draw together information on the production, trafficking, consumption and health effects of drugs and efforts to tackle them. The task is made more difficult by the fact that every aspect of the business is conducted outside the law.

World production of coca leaf more than doubled between 1985 and 1996, while opium production more than tripled. Although seizures have also increased, a drop in the retail price of narcotics indicates that more are getting through to customers.

The report warns of a growing globalisation of the trade, with the traffickers taking often circuitous routes to get their product to market.

Karadzic accused of coup plan

Dan De Luce in Pale

THE Bosnian Serb president, Biljana Plavsic, this week accused hardliners of trying to oust her — and claimed the indicted war criminal Radovan Karadzic was still running the government.

Ms Plavsic's accusations came after Serb sources said she had been detained overnight by government opponents trying to sabotage her attempts to crack down on high-level corruption in the Bosnian Serb republic.

Ms Plavsic did not confirm that she had been held against her will but Nato peacekeepers gave her an escort to leave the northeastern town of Bijeljina where she had spent Sunday night meeting party and military officials at a hotel heavily guarded by police.

Asked by the Belgrade radio station, B-92, if she thought she was the victim of an attempted coup, she said: "Yes, I do."

Ms Plavsic said that she was preparing a report which would show "who is actually running the Bosnian Serb republic" and would accuse Mr Karadzic of "telling people to obstruct state institutions".

She replaced Mr Karadzic as president last year when the international community forced him from public office for his conduct in the Bosnian war.

Mr Karadzic has continued to wield political and economic influence from behind the scenes in collaboration with Momcilo Krajisnik, the Serb member of Bosnia's multi-ethnic collective presidency.

Ms Plavsic told B-92 radio she did not want Nato peacekeepers or the Bosnian Serb army to intervene in her conflict with the hardliners which became public when she failed last weekend to secure the dismissal of the interior minister Dragan Kijac.

She accused Mr Kijac, a Karadzic loyalist, of refusing to investigate two large Bosnian Serb companies associated with the former president and Mr Krajisnik.

Western diplomats, who see Ms Plavsic as more pragmatic than the Karadzic loyalists, were concerned about the political turmoil but said they had "limited options".

Mediators were keen to avoid a repeat of last year's failed attempt by international high representative Carl Bildt to promote a rival to Mr Karadzic's allies.

Mr Bildt suffered a humiliating defeat when he supported the former prime minister, Rajko Kasagic, in a power struggle with Karadzic's party. Mr Kasagic was removed and branded a traitor for plotting with foreign envoys.

There is particular concern about the effect of the conflict on plans to hold local elections in September. If Ms Plavsic were stripped of authority, agreements on election rules could be jeopardised, diplomats said.

With Mr Karadzic and Mr Krajisnik retaining control over the ruling party and the police, Ms Plavsic has few tools at her disposal. But despite her weak position, she has refused to back down.

Local reports suggest her main weapon is a collection of damaging documents about monopolies run by Mr Karadzic and Mr Krajisnik. — *Reuter*

Israel braced for early elections

Julian Borger in Jerusalem

BINYAMIN Netanyahu survived a Knesset no-confidence vote last week but failed to mend the cracks in Israel's coalition government and fuelled the row paralysing the cabinet at a time when Middle East peace talks are ominously stalled.

Several of Mr Netanyahu's most senior ministers voiced concern last week over the government's direction or lack of it, and told their supporters to prepare for early elections. However, the ministers stopped short of withdrawing from the embattled coalition.

The crisis revolves around the prime minister's efforts to promote a hardline former general, Ariel Sharon, to finance minister, and Mr Sharon's demand for a role in formulating security policy.

His promotion is opposed by the foreign minister, David Levy and the defence minister, Yitzhak Mordechai. Both men are seen as moderates who fear being sidelined in relations with the Palestinians.

Those fears were lent weight by the revelation on Israeli television last week that Mr Sharon had held talks with a senior Palestinian official, Mahmoud Abbas. Mr Netanyahu reportedly approved the meeting, but Mr Levy and Mr Mordechai were not informed.

Mr Levy held a press conference on Monday to say he would make up his mind "in the coming days" whether to stay in the government. He warned that while the cabinet bickered, the Middle East peace process was "stuck".

Mr Levy asked: "Where is the government heading? Does it want to advance the peace process as it has undertaken? Yes or no? If yes, how are we supposed to act?"

The minister for internal security, Avigdor Kahalani, told the army radio station that the government was "committing suicide".

Mr Netanyahu won last week's confidence motion by 55 votes to 50, but 11 coalition members — including Mr Levy, and the recently-ousted finance minister, Dan Meridor — stayed away or abstained.

Mr Levy's coalition faction, Gesher, was reported to have held exploratory talks with the opposition Labour party, and the agriculture minister, Rafael Eitan, announced that his party, the junior coalition partner Tsomet, was preparing for early elections.

Mr Kahalani also instructed his Third Way coalition faction to be ready for an election campaign.

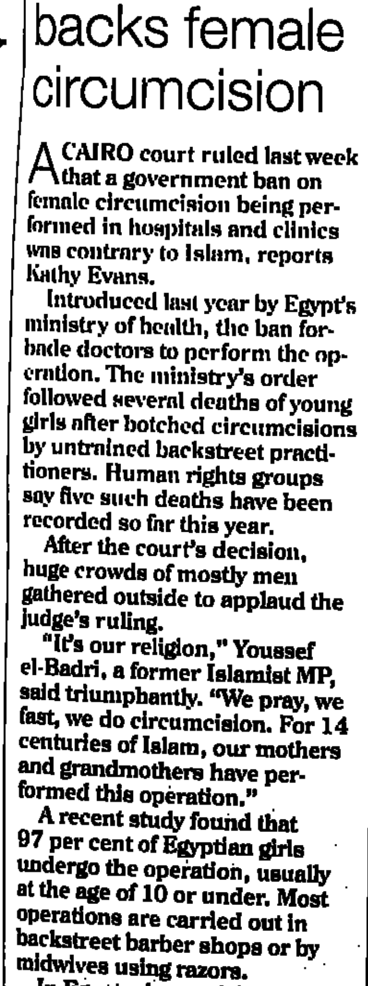
The next elections are not due until November 2000, and political commentators say Knesset members are unwilling to shorten their terms in office by toppling the government and forcing an early poll. However, a further worsening of relations within the coalition may cause them to reconsider.

Mr Sharon was forced out of his job as defence minister in 1983 after a judicial investigation into massacres of Palestinian refugees the preceding year by Israel's allies in Lebanon, the Christian Falangist militias. The inquiry found Mr Sharon could have done more to prevent the killings.

He has been a fervent proponent of Jewish settlements in Palestinian areas (the cause of the current breakdown in peace talks) and has frequently referred to Yasser Arafat as a "war criminal".

Mr Arafat flew to Paris on Monday for talks with President Jacques Chirac and the French prime minister, Lionel Jospin, to explore ways of breaking the impasse.

Egypt court backs female circumcision



A CAIRO court ruled last week that a government ban on female circumcision being performed in hospitals and clinics was contrary to Islam, reports Kathy Evans.

Introduced last year by Egypt's ministry of health, the ban forbade doctors to perform the operation. The ministry's order followed several deaths of young girls after botched circumcisions by untrained backstreet practitioners. Human rights groups say five such deaths have been recorded so far this year.

After the court's decision, huge crowds of mostly men gathered outside to applaud the judge's ruling.

"It's our religion," Youssef el-Badri, a former Islamist MP, said triumphantly. "We pray, we fast, we do circumcision. For 14 centuries of Islam, our mothers and grandmothers have performed this operation."

A recent study found that 97 per cent of Egyptian girls undergo the operation, usually at the age of 10 or under. Most operations are carried out in backstreet barber shops or by midwives using razors.

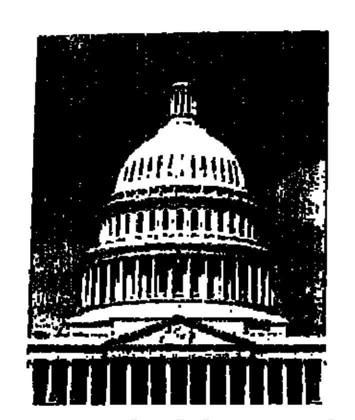
In Egypt, circumcision involves the removal of the clitoris and often the labia. In other parts of Africa, such as Sudan and Somalia, it involves sewing the vaginal opening or even the labia together. Side effects include haemorrhage, sexual dysfunction and problems with urination and menstruation.

The issue has divided Islamic scholars and militant groups. In May, the highest-ranking clergyman, the mufti, issued a fatwa declaring the practice legal, though not mandatory, under Islam.

Anti-circumcision campaigners said that even if the court was forced to reverse its decision, it was unlikely to affect many of the Egyptians among the 6,000 girls circumcised each day around the world.

"Most are not carried out in hospitals anyway, and most mothers will still want their girls to have it. Many Egyptian men would immediately return their wives if they found on their wedding night that they had not been circumcised," Souhair Sabri, a human rights activist, said.

With friends like these who needs enemies?



The US this week

Martin Walker

THE ELDER statesmen of the American foreign policy establishment last week published a thoughtful but passionate open letter to President Bill Clinton, urging him to stop the enlargement of Nato before it was too late.

Paul Nitze, an original cold warrior of the 1940s, former defence secretary Robert McNamara, a veteran of the Vietnam war era, and Paul Warnke, the 1970s arms control expert, joined retired senators Sam Nunn, Gary Hart and Mark Hatfield to warn that it would be "a policy error of historic proportions".

They were reinforced by the two US ambassadors to Moscow in the closing years of the cold war, Arthur Hartman and Jack Matlock, by former CIA director Stansfield Turner and an array of foreign policy think-tank grandees, including Edward Luttwak, Michael Mandelbaum and William Maynes.

Their collective eminence and reputations guarantee a hard-fought policy debate next year, when the amended Nato treaty to absorb the new eastern European members goes to the Senate for ratification. And they are determined to provoke a foreign policy confrontation unprecedented since the Senate rejected President Woodrow Wilson's treaty to join the new League of Nations in 1921.

This will also be a generational clash. Overwhelmingly from the cold war generation, the campaigners contain few of the younger foreign policy experts who grew up in the opposition to the Vietnam war and who now dominate the strategic councils of the Clinton administration. The president and his fellow baby-boomers know that McNamara has been wrong before, and they have been little mollified by his belated apology for being wrong on Vietnam and wrong to stay in President Johnson's cabinet after he had lost faith in the strategy of the war.

The critics' campaign begins as the Nato enlargement process officially gets under way, with Hungary, Poland and the Czech republic due to be invited formally to join at next month's Madrid summit. In their open letter to Clinton, the veterans make four clear points.

First, it is bad for Nato. "Enlargement will inevitably degrade its ability to carry out its primary mission, and will involve US security guarantees to countries with serious border and national minority problems, and unevenly developed systems of democratic government."

Second, it is bad for Russia. "Nato expansion will strengthen the non-democratic opposition, undercut those who favour reform and co-operation with the West, bring the Russians to question the entire post-cold war settlement, and galvanise resistance in the Duma to the Start II and III [arms control] treaties."

Third, it is bad for Europe. "Nato expansion will draw a new line of division between the 'ins' and the 'outs', foster instability, and ultimately diminish the sense of security of those countries not included."

Fourth, it is bad for the United States. Nato expansion will trigger an extended debate over its indeterminate but certainly high cost, and will call into question the US commitment to the alliance, traditionally and rightly regarded as a centrepiece of US foreign policy."

The range of reasons for their opposition to Nato expansion reveals the degree to which the campaigners are a coalition with different concerns and priorities. Take the Russian experts, such as the former ambassadors to Moscow and Susan Eisenhower, grand-daughter of the second world war general and former president, who is married to the Russian space scientist Roald Sagdeyev. They are preoccupied by the policy's impact on Russian politics.

The retired military men and think-tank types, such as Luttwak, are mainly concerned by the dilution of Nato as well as alarm for its "primary mission", although in the absence of any realistic military threat from Russia the definition of this mission is no longer immediately obvious. For the men who negotiated the arms control treaties of the 1970s — Warnke, Jack Mendelsohn and Spurgeon Keeny — concern for the Russian ratification of the new Start treaties is the priority.

The Clinton White House believes they are mistaken on all four arguments, and that it is too late to stop enlargement without hideous damage to the alliance and politically destabilising anguish for the three pivotal states due to join at Madrid. Nor is it fair to other nations promised a future chance, which are making heroic efforts to resolve old quarrels and democratise their systems.

Take the four arguments in turn, and consider the White House ripostes. First, the whole point about "the primary mission" of Nato is that it is over. The mission has been accomplished. There is no longer any serious threat of a Soviet invasion of Europe. There is no Soviet Union, and the Chechen humiliation makes it clear that Russia is a generation away from being able to mobilise a credible conventional military threat.

Second, for Nato to pull back from its proposal to bring the long-excluded eastern Europeans into the club would in fact reward and hearten just those nasty political forces in Russia that the West is keen not to encourage. Clinton argues that if Boris Yeltsin says he can swallow Nato enlargement, now it is sweetened with the new Founding Act that brings Russia into its councils, why cannot we?

Third, if there is some new line of division in Europe, it is a shifting one. The best White House argument for excluding Slovenia and Romania this time is that this almost guarantees that there will be a second round of enlargement soon, strengthening the president's pledge that "the first new members will not be the last".

Fourth, the critics claim that a public debate about Nato's future is too delicate for Americans, a curious argument to pose in a democracy. It also flies in the face of polling data that show staunch and steady US public support for Nato, and more recent polling that suggests Americans are more favourable to Nato enlargement the more they know about it.

Clinton's friends take most seriously that understandable fear of diluting Nato as a uniquely reliable military alliance, because it gets to the core of the issue, and also provides the White House's most forward-looking argument. Nato no longer has a definable enemy. It continues to have a role, in locking the North Americans (don't forget Canada) into the Europe whose endemic tribal wars they have repeatedly been required to resolve.



BUT AS the cold war congealed and a Soviet attack became ever more remote, Nato became more than just an alliance — a structure of collective security, one that Clinton hopes we all have a chance to expand as Nato ceases to be a military camp aimed at Russia and becomes a transatlantic security system that includes it.

Clinton's grand strategy is to repeat the post-war success of bringing Germany into the civilising institutions of the West after 1945, and to do the same for the east Europeans and, eventually, Russians. This will require a parallel and measured enlargement of the European Union as well. But for Clinton and the baby-boomers the choice is clear: between a Nato that grows into an amicable, co-operative venture, or the elder statesmen's nostalgia for an alliance that sticks with the ghastly militarisms of the past.

But Clinton has a further problem. Although the other 15 Nato partners have agreed to invite the Poles, Czechs and Hungarians to join them later this month, the alliance is not a happy ship. For the first three years of the Clinton presidency, until he bit the Bosnian bullet and deployed US air strikes and troops, and rammed through the Dayton peace agreement, the Europeans complained about the lack of American leadership. Now they have it, and don't like it.

That is the US view of the flurry of apparently co-ordinated sniping attacks to which they were subjected at the Denver summit. They also blame sour grapes on the part of those Europeans and Japanese who can no longer enjoy the Group of Seven summits as occasions to lecture an American president about his budget deficits and feeble dollar.

Clinton had been expecting a rather gratifying week, showing his mastery of foreign policy as he hosted the G7 summit, welcomed Russia in the new G8, and fought off the attacks of the Democratic left and religious right to win congressional approval for renewing China's Most Favoured Nation trade status. Although he handily won the China vote, Clinton was first startled and then offended when he realised the degree of resentment that has built up against Americans among their friends and allies. The key word here is "hegemony". And the way French President Jacques Chirac uses it, the word might as well be translated as bullying. The French have been grumbling for months at the US refusal to reward France's return to Nato's military councils by awarding them the top naval command in the Mediterranean.

The US's almost contemptuous dismissal of France's attempt to make Romania one of the first new Nato members sharpened the resentment yet further. The French rounded up the Italians, Germans and others — "the usual suspects", as the Americans call them — to support their view that the fledgling and impoverished government of Emil Constantinescu is a worthy member of the club.

Because France was not alone in urging Romania's case, deputy secretary of state Strobe Talbott called in the Washington ambassadors of the Nato states before Denver and said, bluntly, that it was time to stop whining and accept the American decision. The Poles, Czechs and Hungarians would be invited into Nato at the Madrid conference next month, and that was that.

But the resentment was just building. At Denver, Yeltsin said there was no way he would grace Nato enlargement by attending the Madrid summit. He finally offered a deputy prime minister. Then the Europeans ganged up on the Americans over the environment. Helmut Kohl refused to accept the hand-stitched cowboy boots that had been made for him, and is sending back the Rolex watch given to all Denver participants. Strong stuff in European protocol.

Even Clinton's new chum Tony Blair made waspish remarks about the US's reluctance to tighten the curbs on greenhouse gases, and Chirac observed coldly that the French produced only a third as much carbon dioxide per head as the Americans.

That inimitable French institution Le Canard Enchaîné (which is what Private Eye could be if English public schoolboys ever chose to grow up) then published its own usually reliable version of what Chirac was saying behind the Denver scenes.

"We're wasting our time here. We're nothing but extras in Clinton's marketing plan," Chirac allegedly moaned. "The Americans have already decided to do everything without us. They see us as crap. They take us for retarded."

Quite. Allowing for that French elegance and Cartesian precision with words, that is exactly how the White House speaks in private of the French. But you can see why the election-winning Clinton might feel that way, particularly about the French politician who had just gambled and lost one of the biggest parliamentary majorities in Europe.

France's new prime minister, Lionel Jospin, who did not bother to attend the cowboy boot summit, delivered a full-dress rebuke to the Americans for aiming "beyond leadership to hegemony" before the French National Assembly.

"We see a tendency towards hegemony, which is not necessarily identical with exercising the global responsibilities of a great power, even if it is a friend," he intoned.

The H word was carefully chosen to echo that remark of the Chinese president, Jiang Zemin, in his address to the Russian parliament on April 23, when he suggested Russia should join China in resisting America's post-cold war dominance.

"No country should be allowed to seek hegemony or go in for power politics," Jiang said. "Imposing one's own social system and ideology in international relations is absolutely unacceptable."

All this might get serious, except for the messengers. So long as only the French and Chinese are prepared to complain openly about the way that the only superpower is acting like one, American officials will continue to flourish that Canard Enchaîné clipping like a badge of honour, even as they relish the prospect of taking up the cudgels against Robert McNamara once again.

Washington Post, page 15

Patten bows out with no regrets

The last governor of Hong Kong is leaving with his head held high. **Andrew Higgins** reports

THE crucifix, family portraits and books have all gone. The dogs, Whisky and Soda, went last week. But, ensconced until Monday in Government House and fortified by a popularity rating that would delight a new government, never mind an expiring colonial regime founded by opium pushers, the 28th and last governor of Hong Kong is still not for turning.

Proclaiming "absolutely not a scintilla of regret" about an often tumultuous five-year term that has infuriated China, maddened tycoons, vexed British mandarins and left the colony's already sticky air thick with insults, Chris Patten boasts of the metropolis he quit aboard the royal yacht Britannia this week as "more self-confident and more prepared to stand up and speak out" than when he arrived in 1992.

He mocks the repeated jibes of Sir Percy Cradock, Margaret Thatcher's former foreign policy adviser, Sir Geoffrey Howe and other "retired politicians" as an unseemly "obsession".

On the coffee table lies a thick book about a 19th century Chinese crypto-Christian rebel who almost toppled China's last imperial dynasty. Its title: God's Chinese Son.

Mr Patten confesses to only one error of judgment: that he did not burn his bridges with Beijing earlier. "If I was doing real self-criticism in front of the central committee of the Conservative party, I think I would say that, on the whole, I allowed negotiations to go on too long when it was perfectly obvious that they weren't getting anywhere," he said, referring to fruitless diplomatic haggling over the proper dosage of democracy. "It would have been kinder all round if we'd pulled the plug earlier and just got on with legislating and got the argument out of the way."

Sir Percy, who calls him the "incredible shrinking governor", and other critics say Britain's defiance of China hurt democracy. The legislature elected under Mr Patten's disputed reforms in 1995 met for the last time on June 27 to be replaced by an unelected body appointed by Beijing.

"We've established in people's minds benchmarks which can't be dismantled," said Mr Patten. "People know what a fair election is like and they'll sure as hell know what an unfair election is like if one takes place." A new legislative poll under new rules is due next summer.

"Fatty Patten", as he is routinely called in the pro-Beijing press, has sustained unusually high public support — in contrast to his China-anointed successor, the shipping tycoon Tung Chee-hwa. In a poll released last week, 79 per cent of those surveyed voiced support for the defeated MP for Bath. Mr Tung won 57 per cent support.

Rita Fan, head of the legislature that was due to take over in the early hours of Tuesday, attributes the gap to the "propaganda machinery" of the colonial government. But the governor thanks China's propagandists at the New China News Agency, the local branch of the Communist Party, for his public relations triumphs.

"I support without reservation all the New China News Agency has done to give me what American politicians call international name recognition. They have turned a humble, failed British politician into a knight on a white charger. I suggest that the chief executive [Mr Tung] get them to attack him too."

The Chinese insults that have rained down on Mr Patten — "serpent", "sinner", and "whore who spread his legs for Bill Clinton" — seem to have mostly backfired, at least among ordinary people with no investments in China.

"Why is China always shouting at him? Because he is not weak like [Sir David] Wilson and the others," said K K Cheung, an engineer who rushed to get the governor's autograph during a recent walkabout in a working-class district of Kowloon.

Some, however, genuinely loathe Mr Patten and all he has done. "It is very painful to have to look at this," said Ronnie Chan, a property magnate whose executive eyrie atop the Standard Charter Bank skyscraper, which he owns, looks on to Government House. "He has done nothing but damage Hong Kong."

Mr Chan sees Britain's 11th-hour abolition of restrictive colonial-era legislation and attempts to expand democracy without China's consent as a plot to "booby trap" the territory when China takes over. "For 150 years they ran it one way and then Patten came in and changed everything just before they hand it back. I was not born yesterday," said Mr Chan, an American citizen.

"These people are completely out of touch," said Mr Patten. "I notice that some of them can't hate civil liberties and human rights all that much because they have American passports. I don't see them advocating that the United States should go back to colonial rule."

While packing his belongings, Mr Patten says, he came across fax messages of support from Hong Kong businessmen in 1992 when he first announced a rejig of the electoral system. "They praised the strong and decisive speaking out for Hong Kong. Then the thunder rolled in from the north and some regretted having sent them."

Mr Patten may have abandoned the plumed hats and sabre of his 27 predecessors, but the very success with which he has also ditched the outlook of the system he inherited suggests Mr Tung and China will be able to set their own course too.

"So what do I think of Hong Kong in 1997? I think it's in great shape and I hope the Chinese leadership recognise that," said Mr Patten. The empire that created it, however, is finished. "I wear nothing that clanks. There are no dead chickens [on my head] . . . But I'm a colonial governor. The last of the breed — unless a generous Labour government sends me to the Turks and Caicos Islands."

Comment, page 12

The Week in Britain James Lewis

Gordon Brown goes for a grander Budget debut

THE first Budget of the new Labour Government was to have been announced last month and was expected to be a minimalist one, doing only what was necessary to honour the party's election commitments. The Budget due to be unveiled this week was much less predictable, and suggested that the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, had ambitions for a somewhat grander debut.

Within days of taking office, Mr Brown demonstrated his capacity to surprise by giving the Bank of England independence over interest [illegible] by shaking up financial-market regulations. [illegible] he claims to have found a "black hole" in the finances he inherited from the Tories. How would he fill it?

Mr Brown would not increase income tax rates because he promised not to. He would levy a one-off "windfall tax" on the privatised public utilities to finance Labour's welfare-to-work programme, though it was not known which companies would be hit or whether they would have to shell out £3 billion or £5 billion. And he would cut value-added tax on domestic fuel from 8 per cent to 5 per cent.

With consumer spending surging and house prices rising, the Chancellor was also under pressure to take action to prevent the economy booming out of control and fuelling inflation. This he could do — without breaching his election pledges — by freezing personal allowances and attacking tax reliefs such as that on mortgage interest payments.

Although Labour has promised to work within the almost impossibly tight spending limits that it inherited from the Tories, it was thought Mr Brown might be tempted by some "sin taxes", such as higher duties on alcohol and tobacco; and perhaps by a packet of "green" taxes — on petrol, cars and, possibly, parking. Any extra revenue raised could perhaps finance a lower starting rate of income tax of around 10 per cent to help the very low paid.

The windfall taxes have provoked an outcry from companies claiming that the levy can be met only by increasing charges to customers. For the rest, however, Mr Brown, will probably get an easy ride. Despite Labour's pre-election pledges, a Gallup poll has found that 86 per cent of the electorate actually expect higher taxes.

THE planned Millennium Dome at Greenwich, though reprieved by the Prime Minister last week, continued to be a source of controversy and potential embarrassment to those charged with ensuring its success.

The Minister Without Portfolio, Peter Mandelson, placed in overall charge of the enterprise — and promptly dubbed "Dome Secretary" — gave it a new title, the Millennium Experience. He said it would offer an "unmissable and unforgettable" chance to inspire the nation and would be well worth the £750 million cost.

Drafted in to help were Sir Cameron Mackintosh, the West End theatrical producer, who will produce a multi-media laser show in the 10,000-seat arena, and Mark McCormack, founder of the sporting agency IMG, who aims to raise £150 million in private sponsorship. Many MPs and charity specialists were unhappy to learn that Mr McCormack, working on commission, stands to earn £9 million if he meets his target.

Another "fat cat" pay package of £500,000-plus over three years will go to Jennie Page. She nearly doubled her salary by quitting the Millennium Commission to become chief executive of Millennium Central, which will receive more than £450 million of lottery money to build and run the dome. She insisted she was "worth every penny".

There are, however, still no details of what, precisely, the dome will contain.

BATCHES of new Labour MPs are being given time off from Westminster, in groups of 50, to spend "quality time" in their constituencies. It was part of a scheme by the chief whip, Nick Brown, to make them feel at home in their new jobs and also, perhaps, to stop them hanging around the Commons and making mischief now that the party, with its indestructible Commons majority of 179, can safely dispense with their votes.

Old parliamentary hands are not entirely happy with the scheme, seeing it as an extension of party control. For the same reason, they also refuse to carry the pagers that relay messages reminding MPs when a Commons vote is imminent, telling them which way to vote, and informing them when they can safely go home.

THE PUBLIC Health Minister, Tessa Jowell, was this week due to confront Dr Tim Black, chief executive of Marie Stopes International, over his remark that the methods used by Marie Stopes clinics "has made abortion a minor procedure that could be quite easily completed during a working woman's lunch-time break".

For women less than 12 weeks pregnant, Stopes clinics will this month offer a new procedure for terminations, costing £285, which does not require a general anaesthetic and which Dr Black described as "a new, seamless service without medical drama or moral censure".

Dr Black was only explaining how new procedures reduced pain and discomfort, and reduced the time woman had to remain in the clinics. But anti-abortion campaigners, and Ms Jowell, criticised his "insensitive" language and apparent trivialisation of abortion and of women's feelings.

THE New York sale of Princess Diana's dresses — variously described in headlines as "Diana's cast-offs" or "second-hand clothes" — raised around £3 million for charities, of which £1 million came from the pre-auction sale of the catalogue.

The wardrobe clear-out was auctioned by Christie's on a non-profit basis. One of the 79 frocks on offer, a Victor Edelstein creation, went for £136,000. Cancer and aids charities will be the main beneficiaries.



Weather for ducks and mudlarks as unseasonal rains hit Glastonbury festival-goers PHOTOGRAPH: TWOF

Lashings of the wrong sort of rain

John Vidal

BRITAIN took another massive soaking last week, but with the wrong sort of rain. As Wimbledon and Glastonbury were awash and farmers and holidaymakers complained bitterly, the Environment Agency reported that the south and east of England were still experiencing drought, and water companies urged consumers to continue saving water.

With gales and thunderstorms lashing everywhere except northern Scotland and the Shetland Islands, the Met Office was predicting records: "It's on course for being the wettest June in England and Wales since 1879. It's already four times wetter than June last year. There's been more rain this June than in the whole of the summer of 1995."

Southern England and northern France have lain trapped under a deep depression. And it was difficult to find anyone apart from umbrella sellers and taxi drivers who approved of the incessant rain.

It was officially "too excessive" (National Farmers' Union), "too heavy" (Royal Horticultural Society), "too much" (Glastonbury hippies) and "too wet" (British Tourist Association).

For the water companies, expecting a soaking from the Chancellor's windfall tax this week, the rain was "welcome" because it filled the reservoirs, but it was not suitable to lift water bans or drought orders imposed earlier in the year.

The Environment Agency, the government's statutory nature watchdog, said that heavy summer rain was either absorbed by vegetation growing in the top few inches of soil, or it evaporated if the sun came out. "Very little goes deep into the aquifers that supply most of southern England," a spokesman said.

Yorkshire Water reported that its reservoirs were now 90 per cent full and it expected no restrictions this summer. South West Water said the rain had reduced demand for water because people were not watering their gardens.

"It's good on the surface," said the Environment Agency. "The rivers are rising, the wetlands are recovering, but the only thing that will get us out of the underground drought that has lasted more than two years will be three months' prolonged rain in the winter months when there is less vegetation."

As a black market in wellington boots started at the Glastonbury Festival, where 90,000 music fans experienced conditions described as "impossible", farmers predicted that potato, strawberry and soft fruit prices would rise because the ground was too heavy to lift the crops.

But on a happier note, Thomas Cook reported a 33 per cent increase last month in calls for foreign holidays.

Teachers 'cheated'

THE Government last week ordered an investigation into allegations of widespread cheating in this year's tests for 11-year-olds, *writes Donald MacLeod.*

Teachers confessed in a Guardian interview that they had opened sealed question papers for the tests in order to coach children. Others had helped pupils with answers.

Local authorities and governors should act if there was evidence to justify disciplinary proceedings, Estelle Morris, the junior schools standard minister said. "If it has happened it is most unprofessional."

Teachers and head teachers involved could face the sack, although they said they cheated to protect socially disadvantaged schools from a low ranking in league tables. But one test marker who complained about malpractice said some of the worst offenders were independent preparatory schools.

The School Curriculum and Assessment Authority had received about 50 complaints, a tiny fraction of the 18,000 primary schools which sat the tests, said a spokeswoman.

UK 'diverted Jewish savings'

Julian Borger in Jerusalem

THE British government has been accused of misappropriating "tens of millions of pounds" belonging to Holocaust survivors, who were allegedly denied access to their savings after the war by British bureaucrats.

Jews who survived the Nazis and then the Communists in east and central Europe, died in poverty after long, mostly fruitless, legal battles with Whitehall to reclaim their inheritance, their descendants say.

According to the Tel Aviv business daily, Globes, the Board of Trade deliberately made it difficult for Jews to reclaim their money, and diverted the funds to compensate British citizens who had lost investments in east and central Europe.

A spokeswoman from the Department of Trade and Industry said last week that the matter would be looked into.

Yochanan Leopold's Hungarian-born mother died frustrated in 1991 after decades of trying to force the Government to repay the family fortune her father deposited in Britain as war approached in the late 1930s. The money was confiscated because he was classified as an enemy alien.

After he died in 1949, the family wrote to the Board of Trade's Custodian of Enemy Property pointing out that, as Jews who had suffered terribly at the hands of the Nazis and their allies, they could hardly be considered enemies.

"They wrote back and they wanted us to prove my grandfather's death was a direct consequence of the Holocaust. But how can you prove this?" Mr Leopold said at his home in Tel Aviv.

Itamar Levin, a Globes journalist who read the Custodian's files in the Public Records Office in Kew, said: "In one case, a man was given a form answer telling him that being a prisoner in a ghetto did not mean deprivation of liberty. Maybe some of those British bureaucrats should have spent some time in the ghetto."

"You wouldn't think even in your worst nightmares that Britain would treat Jews who were being killed by the Nazis as enemies," he added.

Mr Levin is calling for a thorough analysis of the 6,000 files on funds expropriated by the Board of Trade.

Germans confront past, page 6

Ulster attack casts doubt on talks offer

David Sharrock

A GRENADE attack on a security patrol in Belfast last week appeared to signify that the IRA had snubbed Tony Blair's "final offer" of a place in talks for Sinn Fein in return for a ceasefire.

No one was injured in the attack on an Royal Ulster Constabulary Land Rover in the Limestone Road area. But it came the day after Mr Blair revealed he was giving the Provisionals five more weeks in which to end their campaign of violence or else he would leave Sinn Fein out in the cold and continue the search for a political settlement without them.

That would mean talks starting in September. Under the "parallel decommissioning" procedure, designed to allow all Northern Ireland's parties to embrace Senator George Mitchell's "six principles", paramilitary weapons would be given up at the start, during and at the end of the negotiations, which now have a deadline for completion — next May.

Although the timetable won the backing of John Hume, leader of the Social Democratic and Labour party, David Trimble, the Official Unionist leader, was more guarded, warning that the mechanisms for disarmament "must actually work".

Unionists remain alarmed at the prospect that Sinn Fein could get into the talks before the independent commission can properly test the quality of the IRA "unequivocal ceasefire" demanded by Mr Blair.

Both he and the Northern Ireland Secretary, Mo Mowlam, stressed repeatedly that "the settlement train is leaving, with or without Sinn Fein".

Sinn Fein's leader, Gerry Adams, later said the proposals would be given the fullest consideration. But he warned: "I remain deeply concerned that the decommissioning issue will become a block to the negotiation of the substantive issues further down the road."

William Hague immediately confirmed that his new Tory leadership team would stand by the existing bipartisan policy.

Later, Ms Mowlam pleaded with the Orange Order and nationalists to compromise over this weekend's flashpoint parade at Drumcree, but there was no sign of an agreement.

The July 6 Orange parade marches from Drumcree church along the nationalist Garvaghy Road into the centre of Portadown.

Talks last week failed to find an agreed route. Representatives of the Orange Order and residents remained in separate rooms while Ms Mowlam shuttled between the two.

If no deal is struck, Ms Mowlam and the RUC Chief Constable, Ronnie Flanagan, will have to decide whether the parade proceeds. To ban it may provoke loyalist violence; to allow it could provoke republican retaliation.

Doctors reject health charge

Chris Mihill

DOCTORS this week rejected charging patients to use the health service but called for a £5 billion cash injection to remedy a growing financial crisis.

They said the Government had to accept responsibility for decisions on rationing rather than leaving those to doctors or managers, and called for an open discussion on priority-setting in the health service.

The British Medical Association's annual meeting in Edinburgh overwhelmingly rejected the idea of extending charges to patients, such as fees to visit a GP or "hotel costs" for hospital stays.

The meeting also rejected the idea that the NHS should be funded from a health tax, although it did agree that the association should examine alternative methods of finance.

Charges, raised as part of the Government's review of health service funding, were supported by a handful of doctors. But the majority said the proposals would harm the poorest and the sickest and were contrary to the basic principle that care should be free at point of use.

Sandy Macara, BMA council chairman, later said that the decision to look at alternative methods of funding the health service did not mean it supported such ideas. Rather, it wanted evidence to show that a tax-based system was the fairest and most efficient system.

Doctors are also to call for a ballot to test the views of the profession on whether health staff should be allowed to help dying patients commit suicide. Many doctors argue there is little difference between euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide and both should stay banned. Some doctors believe helping terminally ill patients commit suicide is more ethically acceptable.

The conference was also due to debate legalisation of cannabis for medical use, changes to the Hippocratic oath, and the banning of alco-pops.

● Ministers last week warned health authorities not to sue cigarette companies on their own, as health service leaders voted to start investigating ways of getting the tobacco industry to help meet the costs of smoking-related diseases.

Tessa Jowell, Public Health Minister, said the Government did not want authorities "engaging in local litigation" and that the issues would be discussed at the Government's anti-smoking summit on July 14.

THE Home Secretary, Jack Straw, is likely to order an inquiry into the murder of Stephen Lawrence after meeting his parents last week.

The move was cautiously welcomed by Doreen and Neville Lawrence (above), who have campaigned for four years to bring their son's killers to justice after what they believe has been a series of failures by the police and legal system.

The hour-long Home Office meeting, refused by Mr Straw's predecessor, Michael Howard, came four months after an inquest concluded that Stephen, aged 18, had been murdered by five white youths in an unprovoked racist attack in 1993.

Mr Straw said he would now consider whether to proceed with a judicial review of the case by the police or a wider public inquiry led by a judge into the issues of racist crime and the relations between the authorities and ethnic minorities.

PHOTOGRAPH: MICHAEL CRABTREE

Welsh MP fights 'gagging'

Michael White

LABOUR MPS last week demanded an official Speaker's inquiry into a possible breach of parliamentary privilege after allegations that the Welsh Secretary, Ron Davies, threatened an anti-devolution backbencher with expulsion from the Parliamentary Labour Party if he campaigns against the policy this autumn.

After Llew Smith, MP for Blaenau Gwent, protested that his local councillors had also been threatened that their links with the Welsh Office could be jeopardised, the Government chief whip, Nick Brown, undertook to investigate.

Mr Davies denied any threats — "It is not in my nature," he said on BBC Radio — but the controversy also involves his political adviser, Huw Roberts, who allegedly warned the general pro-devolution Blaenau Gwent council that there could be problems if their MP persisted with his attacks.

At stake is the right of an MP to vote how his or her conscience and the interests of the constituency dictate without improper external pressure: to make threats could be a breach of ancient privileges.

The row tempted the Tories' new spokesman on Welsh affairs, Nigel Evans, to accuse Labour of "Stalinist activity". But the Blairite doctrine argues that MPs like Mr Smith were elected to support party policy, whatever they may have said in their own manifestos.

Mr Smith told reporters: "I had two meetings with Ron Davies and he informed me that if I should campaign against a Welsh assembly, I would be kicked out of the Parliamentary Labour Party, and if any party member should follow that line they will be expelled from the Labour party."

Mr Smith added: "In all the years I have been in the Labour party . . . I have never experienced the kind of threats and intolerance which I have over the past months."

BA combats strike threat

Seumas Milne

BRITISH Airways on Monday sought to drive a wedge between the two groups of workers on the brink of industrial action by agreeing to talks with ground staff while withholding them from cabin crew until they "put militancy behind them".

The move by the chief executive, Bob Ayling — who is close to the Labour leadership — came as ground staff voted by two to one in a ballot to strike over the sale of the catering operation, and cabin crew voted at a mass meeting at Heathrow to stage a series of 72-hour stoppages over new imposed terms and conditions.

If either dispute leads to walkouts, BA schedules could be thrown into chaos from July 8. The firm has threatened to sack or sue anyone taking industrial action.

In Brief

A BRITISH rating system for UK-built Internet websites so that parents can censor unsuitable material, including pornography, is set to be introduced by the computer industry.

Washington Post, page 16

LAWYERS who bring losing cases on legal aid could be paid only a third or a half the going rate for the job, under new proposals to curb the cost of civil litigation to the taxpayer.

THE Government last week purged the ranks of National Health Service chiefs, announcing the replacement of four of the eight regional chairmen in England. [illegible] Conservative appointments.

RAILTRACK has ordered a nationwide review of its track inspections after admitting negligence in an incident which led to the derailment of a freight train in Bexley, Kent in February.

PEOPLE, particularly the young, are losing the habit of giving to charity, according to a study which suggests that voluntary groups will need increasingly to find other income.

FOR THE first time in history, Westminster Abbey is to introduce charges for a trial period in August to deter visitors after an explosion in numbers caused by the Eurostar rail service.

DRIVERS could soon face drug tests after official figures revealed that illicit drug-taking has increased 400 per cent in the past 10 years among people killed in road accidents.

THE Home Office refused entry to Britain to Ade Onibiyo, the son of a Nigerian pro-democracy activist, who was deported by the last government.

THE eight-year campaign by Hillsborough disaster families achieved a breakthrough with the announcement of an inquiry into new evidence about the football stadium tragedy.

EVERY schoolchild in Britain will be given a computerised personal identification number to allow the Government to track academic performance from the age of five.

THE LAW on telephone tapping is to be reformed after a landmark ruling at the European Court of Human Rights that the right to privacy of a former senior police officer, Alison Halford, had been invaded when she was put under secret surveillance by her colleagues.

THE number of people diagnosed as having cancer will rise by 70 per cent over the next 20 years, according to the Macmillan Cancer Relief charity.

Radioactive waste secretly dumped

David Hencke

THE Government admitted this week that radioactive waste was secretly disposed of in a 300-metre-deep munitions dump close to busy shipping lnnes six miles off the coast — contrary to statements made by ministers for the last 13 years.

Official papers revealed that the Scottish Office authorised the dumping of low-level waste from private companies, including defence contractors Ferranti, during the 1950s and the early 1960s.

Up to two tonnes of waste, in heavy ... encased in concrete, was dumped in Beaufort Dyke in the Irish Sea — a seven-mile munitions dump used by the Ministry of Defence since the 1920s. The extent of the dumping has still to be fully investigated.

Ministers emphasised that they believe there is no danger to the public, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Maff) having checked radiation levels and found them to be within accepted levels. The waste comes from laboratories and from luminous paint and clock dials. Most of it is thought to be from civilian sources.

The disclosure means, however, that statements made to Parliament since 1984 are all false because they are based on an independent report that all Britain's radioactive waste was disposed of in the mid-Atlantic in waters 2,000m deep.

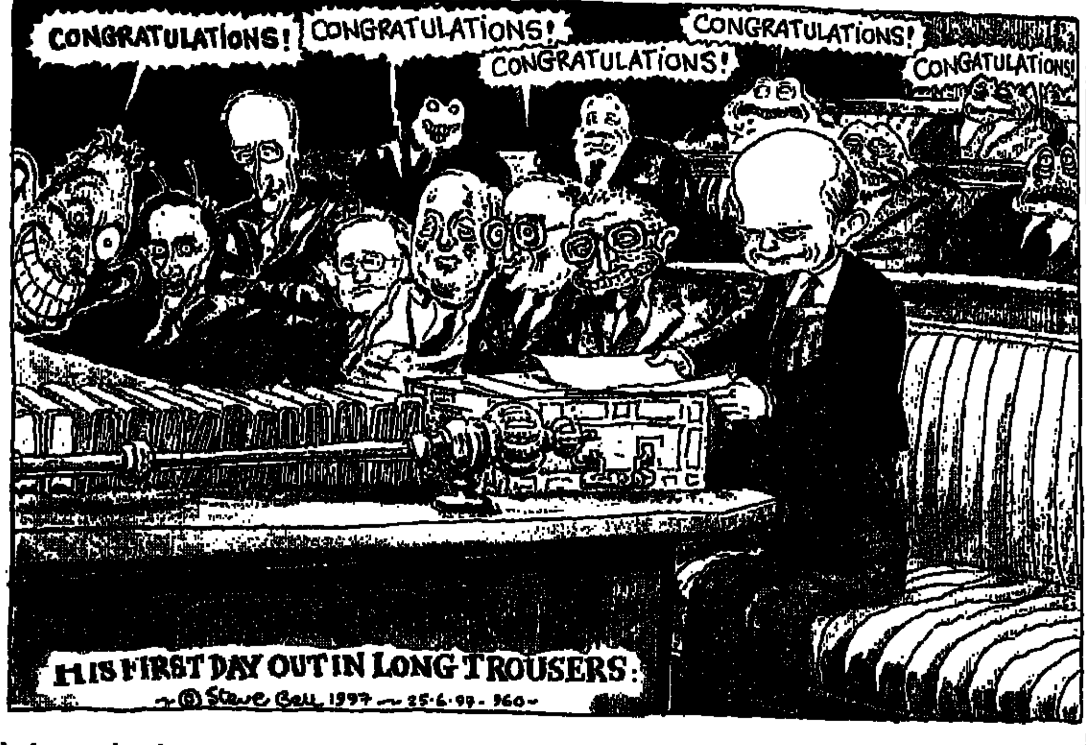
Conservative ministers may have been alerted about the problem by a member of the public who reported information about radioactive waste being dumped by private companies based in Edinburgh.

This came to light during the furore over the disclosure by the former defence ministers Michael Portillo and Nicholas Soames of the scale of hidden defence dumps around Britain, after persistent questioning from the Labour frontbench spokesmen David Clark and George Foulkes, who are now both ministers.

These disclosures revealed that the Ministry of Defence had used the dump for more than 50 years and that at least a million tonnes of bombs, rockets and shells, including 14,000 tonnes of rockets with phosgene poison gas warheads, were dumped there. The last dumping is said to have been in 1976, but MoD records are known to be incomplete. At the time, ministers denied that any radioactive waste had been dumped.

Three ferry routes cross the site and it is regularly used by fishing vessels and nuclear submarines. It is also close to the gas pipeline being built between Scotland and Northern Ireland. Reports of underwater explosions led to the Scottish Office Marine Laboratory in Torrey, Aberdeen, and Maff investigating.

Ministers are said to be keen to set a good example of open government by releasing all the new information that has come to light over the dumping and to keep the public informed of any developments.



Youth in search of answers in ageing world

PARLIAMENTARY SKETCH
Simon Hoggart

WILLIAM HAGUE made his first appearance in the Chamber as Conservative leader last week. As so often during these thunderously historic events, my mind began to wander. I was back in my childhood, a blue light flickered from the Bakelite television set in a neighbour's living room.

A high-pitched voice, plummy and precise, wanting to communicate jollity but merely sounding bossy, is speaking in accents which were familiar on television until the arrival of ITV.

"Time now, boys and girls, for Youth Wants To Know! I have to tell you that this is a very special edition of our programme, because in the studio today we are privileged to welcome the Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Tony Blair!

"And putting the questions today in Youth Wants To Know is a young fellow from Yorkshire, who was chosen in a ballot. His name is Billy Hague. Now, what do you want to quiz the Prime Minister about, Billy?"

"Thank you, sir. I want to ask him about the environment and how we can make it nicer where we live. And I want to ask him about the poor people in Africa, who don't have enough food to eat. And I want to make a stalwart defence of free market capitalism as a means of solving all the things that are wrong in the world!"

Well, I exaggerate, but not all that much. Billy rose to a loud cheer from his own backbenchers. "You'd better savour that one," growled Dennis Skinner.

A colleague whispered in my ear that Billy has rehabilitated so many frontbenchers who were forced to resign (even under the astoundingly lax leadership of John Major — the nalf who actually promoted Jonathan Aitken) that he could set up his own Department of Sleaze.

Shadow Secretary of State For Sleaze: Lord Parkinson (knocked up his secretary); Shadow Minister of State: David Willetts (appeared to try to fix Commons committee on standards); plus Tim Yeo (love child by Tory councillor) and Alan Duncan (shady deals nabbed valuable house at knock-down price). Several of these people were on the front bench with him.

The new Tory leader went on to talk about the "active ageing strategy". Was this something Mr Hague had done to himself, rather in the way that crooked antique dealers "distress" modern furniture to make it look old?

"Can the Prime Minister tell us what an active ageing strategy is, and can he tell us if he has got one?" Labour members began to chortle in a demented, hyperventilating sort of way.

I suspect they are underestimating Mr Hague. Odd he may look, painfully young he may be, right-wing he is, but stupid he is not.

Hague risks war on Europe

Lawrence Donegan

WILLIAM HAGUE threatened to re-ignite Conservative party divisions on Europe last week by calling for a referendum on the outcome of last month's Amsterdam summit and indicating that he will conduct a "guerrilla-style" parliamentary campaign against the deal agreed by Tony Blair.

The Tory leader, making his first major public speech since his election, startled representatives at his party's Scottish conference with his call for a plebiscite on Europe. But in a concerted effort to shift the political debate on to the issue, aides said afterwards that the Government had ceded powers to Europe in 39 different areas.

Mr Hague is seeking to re-unite his divided party with a vigorous campaign in Parliament against the treaty — emulating the tactics adopted by Labour in frustrating the passage of the Maastricht bill, one aide said.

He may be striving for unity but his uncompromising message on the constitution — staunch on the Union and hardline Eurosceptic — will give little comfort to the Euro-enthusiast wing of his parliamentary party which voted *en bloc* in the leadership election for the former chancellor, Kenneth Clarke.

Mr Hague was spared the first major embarrassment of his leadership when the threat of a breakaway Scottish Tory party receded, but he made a frank assessment of what he described as a "catastrophic" defeat on May 1.

"We lost, not for a single reason, but for a whole set of reasons — we were seen as divided, greedy, self-absorbed and we were seen as remote from the people we were elected to serve," he told the conference in Perth.

On the forthcoming devolution referendum, Mr Hague committed his party to the campaign against the proposed Scottish parliament. He described the Government's plans for a pre-legislative referendum as a "travesty of democracy".

Devolution would unleash wild expectations, followed by disappointment and years of tension between Westminster and Edinburgh, he said. "We are staunch defenders of the Union and we will never abandon that principle," he said.

But Allan Stewart, a Scottish Office minister for 14 years before he stood down at the last election, argued that backing independence might be better than backing a flawed assembly. "Conservatives would flourish in an independent nation state rather than the confused half-way house that's currently proposed by the Labour government."

Mr Hague's speech came at the end of a one-day conference at which Scottish activists put aside weeks of bitter in-fighting and voted to campaign against devolution in September's referendum. An expected revolt on the issue disintegrated, with only a handful voting against the leadership.

However, the pro-devolutionists won a minor concession when the leadership set up a committee to look at the possibility of granting more internal autonomy to the party in Scotland.

Railtrack backtracks on spending disclosure

Keith Harper

THE chairman of Railtrack, Sir Robert Horton, last week hoisted the white flag and surrendered to the industry regulator by conceding to new scrutiny of how it spends government subsidies.

After a tense meeting, the watchdog, John Swift, forced the privatised track and signalling company to agree to an amendment to its licence compelling it to give exact details of how it spends the £2 billion a year it receives from the taxpayer.

Mr Swift was acting with the backing of the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, who is determined that the industry should be accountable through Labour's proposed strategic rail authority.

Mr Prescott has stated that unless a satisfactory deal is reached, the whole question of how Railtrack is regulated will be opened up again.

So far, Railtrack has spent only £50 million on station improvements, though it has a £450 million backlog. When it floated last year, Railtrack inherited a £720 million shortfall of investment. After 12 months in the private sector, it had reduced this by only £43 million to £677 million.

Railtrack is expected to have £200 million taken from its profits through the windfall tax in the Chancellor's Budget this week on the grounds that the company is being underpinned by the taxpayer.

Meanwhile water regulator Ian Byatt served notice that he would crack down on dividend payments and demand a better deal for customers in new price controls.

Warning that it was unsustainable to increase dividends to shareholders while profits were largely flat, he said one-off cuts in bills should be used to pass on efficiency savings to consumers more quickly.

Mr Byatt was launching his formal consultation exercise ahead of the 1999 review of price controls on the water and sewerage companies. Like other utility regulators, he has taken a much more interventionist stance since Labour was elected.

The gas industry regulator recently won Monopolies Commission agreement for a one-off price cut in pipeline charges.

Aitken quits Privy Council

JONATHAN AITKEN, the disgraced former Tory minister who dramatically dropped his libel action against the Guardian last month, has resigned from the Privy Council in order to avoid the humiliation of being struck off, *writes Rebecca Smithers*.

He is only the third member of the Privy Council to resign this century, following John Profumo in 1963 and John Stonehouse 13 years later.

There was intense pressure for him to be removed from the council — a privilege which carries the title Right Honourable and gives access to the Queen — since his climbdown when new evidence obtained by the Guardian and Granada Television showed that the former minister had lied to the High Court.

Aitken, who is thought to be in Florida, is being sought for investigation by Scotland Yard over allegations of perjury and seeking to pervert the course of justice.

Comment, page 12

'Second-best' wins digital TV fight

Andrew Culf

BRITISH Digital Broadcasting was last week awarded licences to launch more than 15 new television channels, despite concerns about BSkyB's dominant position, and even though its programme plans were judged second best.

The winning group, backed by Carlton and Granada, was forced by the Independent Television Commission to drop BSkyB as a shareholder to weaken Rupert Murdoch's stranglehold over the digital television revolution. But the satellite station will still be allowed to supply three premium-priced sports and movie channels to BDB's digital terrestrial network.

The arrangement was criticised by Don Cruickshank, director general of Oftel, the industry regulator. In its submission to the commission, Oftel said: "The participation of BSkyB either as a consortium member or as a long-term supplier of certain pay-television services, in particular sports programming, raised substantial competition concerns in the pay-television network and conditional access markets."

BSkyB is already planning to launch more than 200 digital satellite channels in spring 1998, months before digital terrestrial starts. The markets, however, saw the commission's decision as the latest reverse for BSkyB, following the surprise resignation of its chief executive, Sam Chisholm, last month. Since mid-June, the company's value has dropped by £2.5 billion ($4 billion).

BDB's defeated rival applicant, Digital Television Network, hinted that it might seek a judicial review of the commission's decision. James Gatward, chairman of DTN, said: "The decision raises continuing and serious concerns in relation to competition and other matters."

Its plans for 23 channels and a range of interactive services were praised as innovative and more attractive than BDB's by the commission. But the commission decided BDB's financial muscle and "broad appeal" programming — including Sky Sports and Sky Movies — were more likely to lead to the successful take-up of digital terrestrial services.

Michael Green, chairman of Carlton and BDB, said: "This is a great day for British television. Digital means more choice for viewers."

Viewers, who will need to spend about £200 on a set-top box decoder, will be able to receive more than 30 digital terrestrial channels from autumn 1998. Digital viewers will still get BBC1, BBC2, ITV, Channel 4 and Channel 5 free, plus bonus channels, including the BBC's 24-hour TV news.

Mr Green said: "I fully accept DTN's programmes were more innovative — but we must have programmes that people want to watch. A bird-watching channel, or opera-watching channel, will not attract viewers."

Carlton and Granada, who both become 50 per cent shareholders in the £300 million venture, have bought BSkyB's stake for £75 million. BSkyB said it was a good deal because of the one-off cash payment and the long-term "financially enhanced programme supply deal". The company is also likely to supply set-top boxes and subscriber management systems.

A BSkyB rival said: "In some senses, it must be a dream result for BSkyB. The company will have 70 per cent of the revenues and take no risk."

McDonald's brings back British beef

Rebecca Smithers

BRITISH beef will be back on the menu at McDonald's fast-food restaurants by the end of this month, the company said last week, as it announced an end to a 15-month ban on its use in hamburgers.

The Government welcomed the move as a sign of confidence in British beef that could boost Britain's chances of ending Europe's beef export ban in the wake of the long-running BSE scare.

The decision by McDonald's, which followed consumer surveys showing that the majority of its customers favoured the return of British beef, will give a boost to the farming industry.

The company's managing director, Andrew Taylor, said McDonald's had already placed its first orders: "The results of our last research . . . show that 74 per cent of consumers now want us to sell British beef."

Before it introduced the ban, McDonald's bought about half its beef from British producers — worth £30 million a year — and expects this level to be resumed.

Jack Cunningham, the Agriculture Minister, said the announcement "gives extra strength to our arguments for lifting the ban. This says that the product is safe, it is high quality".

But the fast-food giant was strongly criticised by leading microbiologist Professor Richard Lacey — the first scientist to warn BSE could pass to humans. He said all beef, whether British or foreign, still posed a risk.

McDonald's is the largest fast-food restaurant chain in Britain. Its nearest rival, Burger King, said it was unlikely to follow McDonald's lead until its own consumer research showed a more positive trend.

Max Woolfenden, managing director of Wimpy, said: "We moved back into British beef in May last year and customers have responded most favourably."

Treasury officials have told the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, that the cost of the BSE crisis could be £700 million more than had been estimated, taking the total to £4 billion or more.

It's Hong Kong's future that matters

THE HANDOVER of Hong Kong to China is an occasion for superlatives, an event of huge symbolic and actual significance unmatched by any previous colonial transfer of power. A territory of 6 million people with a distinct identity is being returned by the oldest imperialist power to a nation that may become the next century's superpower.

There will be much competition among all those involved to hand out sweeping verdicts on history. The British will be credited (especially by the British) with having done a splendid, disinterested job. The people of Hong Kong will be congratulated by others (they will be more modest themselves) for their qualities of hard work and adaptability, which have played a large part, it is said, in making Hong Kong a "unique" place. Both sides will claim to have done the very best to ensure a smooth transition from colonial rule to reunification, while blaming the other for the evident discontinuity Hong Kong now faces. And Beijing with all the considerable hyperbole at its disposal, will proclaim Monday a glorious day for the Chinese people, for the Hong Kong people — and for the Communist Party of China.

Yes, Hong Kong has come a long way under British rule. From being "the fearfullest hole on earth", as one early resident described it, it has become in the eyes of its modern enthusiasts almost a paradise on earth. Real life is more diversely shaded, and for many Hong Kongers, working hard in polluted and overcrowded conditions, a good deal less than idyllic. The rewards are clear in the huge dynamism of consumption now visible in the shopping malls of the new towns as much in central Hong Kong. But the environmental balance is precarious and will be placed under further strain as the population grows. (It would be even worse if most of Hong Kong's industry had not been exported across the border into southern China.) The social infrastructure still lags behind despite of improvements since the 1970s. It was significant that the outgoing Legislative Council should have passed legislation on collective bargaining only in its last days — and should be criticised for doing so by new and old governments alike. Whether traditional laissez-faire attitudes, now reasserted by the business élite that is taking over, will be enough in the future is problematic. Hong Kong's special location, history and relationship with China also reduces its value as an economic model for anywhere else. China itself has room for only one Hong Kong, and other challengers, even Shanghai, are unlikely to replace its role.

This is also a moment when it is appropriate to take a longer view of Hong Kong's history, starting with the opium wars. If it is absurd for Chinese commentators to label the entire 156 years since then with the guilt of British imperialism, it is equally silly to shrug aside the wars of 1839-42 and 1857-60 as remote history. For many Hong Kongers who are apprehensive of Beijing's intentions, the collective memory of the way that Britain acquired Hong Kong still tips the balance in favour of being handed back. It is reinforced by more recent memories of colonial attitudes that persisted well into the second half of the 20th century. Until very recently, many British officials continued to disparage native Chinese Hong Kongers, particularly those who, in the late 1970s, began to campaign on social and political issues. Hong Kongers do have some gratitude for what Britain has done, particularly since the reforms of the 1970s (themselves impelled by the build-up of popular resentment that China had exploited in the 1966/67 riots). But another strand in the mesh of public opinion is a degree of quiet satisfaction that the British are finally on the way out. The feeling that history matters is not confined to mainland rhetoric. Even at this late stage, some sort of formal contrition from Britain for the past would be appropriate.

The government of China and those who speak for it have even less reason to suppose that they enjoy great popularity among the majority in Hong Kong. Many Hong Kongers who have been taking part in "patriotic" and pro-Beijing activities to welcome the return will still express privately their disquiet about the future. The 1984 agreement was generally unpopular: Britain secured Hong Kong's reluctant consent to it only by arguing that there was no practical alternative. Hong Kongers are nothing if not realistic. Though confidence did pick up, it was dealt a devastating blow, from which it has never recovered, by the Beijing massacre. The current regime may complain that concern over human rights in China and democracy in Hong Kong has arisen very late in the day. They have only themselves to blame: this is no British plot, but the direct result of an episode of great brutality that, sooner or later, a Chinese government will have to repudiate. The arrival at dawn on Tuesday of 4,000 PLA troops across the border shows how insensitive and rigid Chinese policymaking still is. Of course, as the new chief executive, Tung Chee-hwa, has explained apologetically, China's military presence is "a symbol of sovereignty", but why is it necessary to prove the point so heavy-handedly? If Beijing wants Hong Kongers at ease, the rumble of armoured personnel carriers is a disturbing start.

The unfortunate failure to agree upon a "through train" that would allow the elected legislature to continue in office can also be traced back to 1989. Though British negotiators had made efforts, from the 1984 talks onwards, to strengthen the democratic provisions for post-1997, they had always deferred to Chinese objections rather than provoke open disagreement. After 1989, this policy was politically much harder to maintain. Whether the eventual rupture with Beijing could have been avoided is debatable, and much more evidence will be needed to reach any sort of conclusion. The sound of former senior officials sniping at Mr Patten is unpleasant. It is hard to understand why these formerly loyal servants of the crown should convey, by nod or wink, their disapproval now. Mr Patten was widely applauded at the time when he sought to break the mould of conventional diplomacy — perhaps, to the noble lords, that is his real crime. The responsibility is not his alone for a policy that failed, although he would do well to acknowledge that in retrospect it could have been handled more subtly. Yet this is an issue for historians. What concerns Hong Kong now is the future: it is tomorrow and the months and years after for which Hong Kong needs the support of the outside world. After all the superlatives have been spoken, we must not let our attention drift away.

Setting a lead for the world

THE 100 million land-mines buried across the globe constitute a lethal archipelago in which victims are killed or maimed at the rate of one every 20 minutes. Yet two million mines, some estimate, are still being laid every year. They continue to be used by soldiers against soldiers, but have increasingly become a means of terrorising and intimidating the civilian population in war zones. And they do this long after the war is over. Even on a purely economic reckoning — the loss of productive lives, the cost of medical treatment for the injured, the cost of support for the disabled, and the costs of mine clearance — they represent a heavy burden on poor countries trying to put periods of conflict behind them. They cripple people, and societies.

The movement to ban anti-personnel mines has grown rapidly. At the start of 1995, not one country supported a ban. By the end of that year, 50 countries had endorsed the idea, and by the end of 1996, 50 countries, meeting in Ottawa, agreed to support a global ban. An even larger number committed themselves to the same end in the UN General Assembly in December 1966. Non-governmental organisations, whose field workers saw at first hand the consequences of mining in many countries, started the push. The Canadian government took it up, and the Canadian foreign minister, Lloyd Axworthy, has pursued it with vigour, in the spirit of his country's honourable tradition of making pragmatic, practical contributions to peace. One of the first acts of the new British government, although with a reservation on exceptional circumstances, was to join the "Ottawa process". The Russians, Americans, and Chinese have not joined, preferring to deal with these matters in the UN Conference on Disarmament.

Events have underlined the wisdom of the Canadian initiative. It will produce a ban that is total, for those who subscribe to it. But it will be partial, in that many countries will not, at least initially, sign up for it. That is not as desirable as a universal ban, but that option is not available. Last week, while talks in Brussels on the Ottawa process went well, UN talks in Geneva did not move at all. Nor are they likely to, since China and Russia are reluctant, and the US does not want to move until they do. These big countries can shelter behind the obstacles thrown up by nations using the mines issue as a way of gaining other objectives. If a treaty banning mines can be signed by, say, 50 nations in Canada later this year, this will be worthwhile in itself and bring serious pressure to bear on those outside the accord.

Burdened with proof

Alan Rusbridger calls for a reform of British libel laws after the Aitken trial

A STRANGE silence has fallen over the Friends of Jonathan Aitken. The voices that crowded the airwaves two years ago to savage the Guardian are suddenly quiet. Only dear old Paul Johnson — who never once turned up in court or sought evidence that might conflict with his prejudices — still stumbles on in blind, splenetic faith.

The Friends should probably be left in peace to come to terms with their personal betrayal. But we should not forget their chorus of vitriol when their fallen hero first brandished his rusty sword of truth. We should not forget the Archie Hamiltons, Bernard Inghams and Roger Gales who once tripped over themselves to condemn an overweening press and demand further, draconian restrictions on its freedom.

We shouldn't forget them, as there is little doubt their chorus contributed to the mood of debate as a potentially helpful Defamation Bill wound its way through Parliament last year. MP after MP, peer after peer denounced the media and killed any radical amendments that would have enabled serious newspapers to do an unencumbered job of reporting areas of proper public concern.

That was the backcloth against which the judge and the Court of Appeal acceded to Aitken's request to get rid of a jury. We can now see that ploy for what it was: the con-trick of a man intending to lie on oath, who wanted to engineer the most favourable audience for his lies. One hopes that the learned judges who soberly agreed with this ploy now feel a twinge of unease.

This is not triumphalist rubbing of salt into open wounds. It is a reminder of what actually happens when newspapers risk a very great deal to draw attention to misdeeds in public life. The number of people who come to their help at the time — be they politicians, judges or even fellow journalists — is very limited. The heat of the battle is usually forgotten in the resounding applause that greets the victory.

The Friends now sit in clubland shaking their hands and asking: "How on earth did Jonathan think he would get away with it?" The answer is very simple. Britain's libel laws are almost perfectly designed to protect a powerful person with a modest talent for the plausible lie. For a man in serious trouble, it was worth the gamble.

Aitken v Guardian Newspapers and Granada TV is almost an object lesson in how the odds favour a powerful fraudster, but there are many others. Another example came last week with the revelation of how Bob Boothby — aided by a future Labour Lord Chancellor, Gerald Gardiner QC, and Arnold Goodman — took the equivalent of £500,000 off the Sunday Mirror by lying. An earlier example was the way in which Aneurin Bevan, Morgan Phillips and Richard Crossman lied under oath to get damages off the Spectator, again with Goodman's help.

In the United States, the Aitken case would probably not have come to court, because American laws are framed to encourage, rather than discourage, newspapers in the exercise of fair scrutiny of people who choose to go into public life, with all its privileges and responsibilities. Under these laws, Aitken would have had to prove malice or recklessness before being able to launch an action. That is just what he did originally claim — only to drop it midway through the interlocutory hearings.

It is high time some form of such a public figure/public interest defence was enshrined in British law. But there is another crucial difference between American and English laws. In the US, it would have been up to Aitken to prove the story of the Ritz was untrue. In Britain, it was up to the Guardian to prove the story was true. That reverse burden of proof is unique in English civil law and is seen with some astonishment by countries with a better-developed sense of how free speech is best protected.

If Aitken had been telling the truth, it would have been easy for him to prove us wrong. He would have had access to all the necessary credit-card data, booking forms, bank accounts and hotel receipts to show he and his family were where they said they were. The Guardian would have been dead in the water.

Consider how nearly Aitken got away with his lie under the present law. The one thing we were sure of was that he was lying. Proving it to the satisfaction of a judge sitting alone was a different matter. In the end, Aitken was nailed only through an extraordinary paper chase as we reconstructed the movements of his family over one weekend in 1993.

Aitken's story depended on his wife, Lolicia, being in Paris on the Sunday at lunchtime to pay his bill. Unpicking that story depended on identifying and demanding on subpoena telephone logs, hotel bills, receipts and credit-card records — many of them abroad, and thus beyond jurisdiction. The breakthrough came about through pure chance. To disprove Aitken's defence, we had to get his wife's bill from the Hotel Bristol in Geneva. But why would a foreign hotel give records to a newspaper that might incriminate a client? By a stroke of luck, the hotel was in receivership with a caretaker happy to let our reporter look at the records.

THAT BILL blew his defence apart and also led us to the Amex bill (concealed by Aitken), the car-hire agreement and the British Airways tickets. Had Lolicia flown Swissair, we would still have been in the dark. The clinching evidence arrived just 16 hours before 17-year-old Victoria Aitken was due in the witness box to perjure herself on her father's behalf.

Is it any wonder, given such accidents and coincidences, that Aitken thought he would get away with it? It would be hard to devise a process to make it more difficult or costly for a newspaper to get the evidence to prove its case. The whole system is the greatest possible disincentive for editors to print a story they believe to be true about a dishonest public figure. Why risk it, when it could cost millions of pounds if, because of bad luck or lack of resources, they failed to find conclusive proof?

This may seem an obscure piece of special pleading over an arcane aspect of the libel laws. It is, I hope, more than that. If newspapers are right to expose dishonest men at the heart of government — and no one (bar Paul Johnson) now suggests the Guardian was wrong — then they need practical help.

Alan Rusbridger is the editor of the Guardian

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
July 6 1997

Le Monde

Minister calls for new idea of citizenship

The French interior minister, Jean-Pierre Chevènement, talks to **Philippe Bernard** and **Nathaniel Herzberg**

THERE will be no sweeping regularisations of foreigners living in France without residence permits, such as those that took place in 1981, promises the new interior minister, Jean-Pierre Chevènement. "But I'm convinced there is a place in France for a firm yet generous immigration policy in keeping with our national interests."

Scoffing at the idea of zero immigration, he said that every year for the past four years about 100,000 foreigners have obtained the right to live in France — foreigners married to French citizens, political refugees, relatives of legally accepted residents or those permanently employed in useful sectors. In his view, this is a normal procedure in a country that has an international outlook.

"With 5 million unemployed, we need to take the social and economic situation into account. So the cry of 'Documents for all' doesn't make sense. France has two fundamental problems: unemployment and profound doubts about its identity and its future."

French nationality is based on the idea of citizenship, not on membership of an ethnic group. "The identity of France is that of the republic. A Frenchman is a French citizen, nothing more and nothing less. The nation of citizens is quite the opposite of the ethnic nation. It defines itself as a shared project, not by reference to some mythical 'stock'. The left must defend this republican conception of the nation."

Asked what justification there was for regularising foreigners living in France without appropriate documents, Chevènement pointed out that the immigration law, after more than 40 successive amendments, has become incomprehensible. "We must put an end to this bewildering legal tangle, which has put a large number of foreigners in a situation where they can be neither expelled nor accepted for regularisation."

The government therefore proposes a complete overhaul of the immigration and nationality legislation to be incorporated in a draft bill to be placed before parliament in the autumn. The act will have a twofold purpose: integrating immigrants in the spirit of republicanism, and co-development with the countries supplying immigrants. "France's international outlook doesn't allow it to barricade itself behind its borders," says the minister. "Having said that, we shouldn't give in either to xenophobic temptations or to the siren calls of pious do-gooders."



'Ah! France, the land of camembert, foie gras . . . and couscous'

But he added: "We can't forget history either. Many who are regarded as 'immigrants' or 'children of immigrants' are the grandchildren of Algerian infantrymen or Moroccan *goums* [auxiliaries] who fought for the liberation of France, and the children of those who helped to rebuild our country after 1945.

"In short, we should treat with dignity all foreigners, whoever they are. The basis of our policy is republican integration: it concerns all French people. We must foster the desire to be French, that is, to become citizens. This requires education in civic responsibilities and a policy that puts employment at the heart of the problem. Integration implies a shared desire to help France thrive. It's France's existential uncertainty that makes integration more difficult. There is no such existential uncertainty in the United States."

The idea of a France without borders has been gaining ground in some leftwing quarters. Where did the minister stand between this demand and the goal of zero immigration sought by a former immigration minister?

"Obviously, we must keep immigration under control," said Chevènement. "It's a difficult and unrewarding task for the police. The state has to respect the law, otherwise it becomes an open invitation to disorder and violence . . . A country like ours, where unemployment is rampant, cannot be open to all-comers. It has to preserve its social and political equilibrium, but neither is it sensible to cut itself off from the rest of the world."

Asked whether he did not see a contradiction between the globalisation of trade and the closing of borders, the minister answered: "The contradiction is obvious from the liberal viewpoint, but it's not one I share. In my view, it's not just immigration that has to be controlled, but the movements of capital. If the economy is to be placed at the service of man, the answer is not liberal globalisation, but co-development of the North and the South."

As interior minister, Chevènement also has responsibility for certain religious matters. "Islam, the second most important religion in France, doesn't have suitable places of worship," he said. "I don't see why a religion should be for ever condemned to express itself in cellars and garages. Short of accepting the financing of Islamic places of worship by foreign powers, with all the ambiguities that entails, I think it would be preferable to address the problem squarely. That said, what I think personally is one thing. The interior minister responsible for religious questions will express the government's position on the subject in due course."

Noting that exchanges are already taking place between immigrants living in France and their home countries, the minister said co-development would spare them unnecessary administrative harassment. It would also help to better target the aid given to countries from which immigrants are arriving in France. Or arrangements could be made for young people from these places to study and train in France without depriving their own countries of the know-how acquired. Some competitive examinations could be thrown open to them, on condition the candidates return to their countries of origin, even if this means having to pay them salaries as if they were French nationals sent on a mission abroad. This is one of the avenues the ministry will be exploring.

Under existing laws, children born in France of foreign parents have to decide to become French before the age of 21. Chevènement considers it a good idea gone wrong. "First, it's a whole lot of useless paperwork. Next, it's a source of discrimination which contributes to making these children's parents the parents of foreigners. Finally, do you think that merely filling in a form is enough to make one a French person? Of course not. The form is the promise of an identity card that will later entitle the bearer to the minimum welfare benefit. That's all. Does that really correspond to a desire to be French?" asks the minister.

"To me, couscous has become a French dish. Contrary to assimilation, which implies abandoning all one's roots, integration proceeds by enriching, by making successive contributions. French identity is progressive. It is not today what it was at the end of the last century, and it will not be what it is today at the end of the next."

(June 26)

Child abuse must not lead to lynch mobs

COMMENT
Alain Finkielkraut

SINCE the large-scale police swoops into what has been described as "paedophile circles" began, five people have committed suicide. How many more deaths, how many hangings, how many acts of despair will it take for France to be satiated?

The country is reeling from the terror unleashed by the shattering revelations in the press day after day. There is outrage and bewilderment at the proportions of this omnipresent and far-reaching evil of sexual violence that has been inflicted on children. Teachers, clerics, festival organisers and holiday camp group-leaders all feel under suspicion. "Not everybody is a pervert, but there are perverts everywhere, especially in the most respectable professions," is the line newspapers have been taking almost without exception as they pull out all the stops in reporting the revulsion felt by police investigators and the implacably clear conscience of judges.

Almost as soon as they received their portfolios, the new government's two education ministers, with little thought for the consequences, leapt on to the bandwagon and formally announced they were going to break with the preceding administration's supposed permissiveness. Childhood is certainly sacred but does the pious anger directed against paedophiles today justify jettisoning the most elementary rights and differences?

Does it justify branding people who are still only suspects by giving lurid publicity to investigations into their private lives? Does it justify casting the frightening shadow of Marc Dutroux [the self-confessed murderer of children in Belgium] over all deviant practices?

Stifling the demand in order to stifle the supply is fine. However, is looking at a videocassette showing teenagers masturbating the same thing as going out and molesting children? Let's make no mistake about it: the moral fervour unleashed on French society represents a terrible regression: the frontier of puberty is disappearing in the maternal fantasy of an innocent and never-ending childhood falling victim, as soon the young leave home, to the widespread and imagined greed of a gigantic plot.

Today, the ogre of the paedophile ring is providentially a neo-Nazi, but the paranoia is going to take its natural course and the France of the poison-pen letter-writer, which this campaign has resuscitated, will soon start to inveigh against politicians, financiers and the "Elders of Zion".

We have to crack down on paedophilia, but this new French campaign is turning into a hysterical lynching of the rapists of angels: it is not good news either for children or for civilisation.

(June 25)

Cousteau, a myth bigger than the man

EDITORIAL

CAN WE survive without Jacques-Yves Cousteau? From President Clinton down to schoolchildren, there has been the same refrain: a vast outpouring of superlatives, forced or sincere, about the work of the great man who has just died. But the acclamation is too much of a kind not to be suspect.

It has to be said that the most extravagant praise has come from the leaders attending the Earth Summit in New York who have shamelessly displayed their fecklessness and incapacity to face up to major ecological challenges — those painful survival-of-the-species issues that "Captain Planet" set out to bring to the world's attention.

Jacques-Yves Cousteau, who wasn't above dramatising his own image and who loved to hobnob with the great of this world, would surely have appreciated the coincidence.

Vice paying homage to virtue? It's not that simple. Cousteau's character was not all of a piece and does not quite synchronise with the image that television channels (some of them under contract to him) have been bombarding us with: the fearless knight above reproach, the courageous visionary single-handedly leading the fight in the interests of the community.

There is another, far from flattering, side to him as someone given to wheeling and dealing, to hamming it up in a manner occasionally bordering on megalomania, to indulging in scientific approximations and going along with political compromises. But although the "righteous" man may be dead, the Cousteau business marches on.

His remarkable talent for profiting from what we condemn should not, however, conceal the significance of Cousteau's image. There are moments in history when individuals embody a key idea, whatever their weaknesses. The myth prevails over the man himself.

Despite his financial problems and run-ins with the media, Cousteau remains in the collective imagination as the man who best represents the end of the century, with his anxieties and backward glances. His voyages, films and accounts bear witness to a world undergoing radical change — an era in which nature's age-old equilibriums are yielding to expediency and the ephemeral — and to a time past whose simple wonders we would like to preserve.

And this is happening at a time when a new generation is casting about for a sense of direction, though we are uncertain whether it will lead us to the Apocalypse, the fate that Cousteau promised human society if it did not come to its senses.

(June 27)

Obituary, page 27

Detecting fallout and falsehood

Véronique Maurus
charts the history of Crii-Rad, France's only independent radioactivity analysis laboratory



IN FRONT of a barge moored beneath Avignon's ramparts there was a pile of metal drums stamped with the nuclear symbol. "No radioactive dumping ground in the Rhône Valley" said a banner. The crowd of people that had crammed on to the barge were not of the long-haired variety one might have expected. The few who were wearing jeans stood out against the majority of besuited men and women.

The collective that had gathered to oppose the construction of an underground storage site for radioactive waste in Marcoule, near Orange, was organised by the Vaucluse employers' association. The assembled doctors, lawyers, winegrowers and restaurateurs were not of the stuff that anti-nuclear protesters are usually made of.

"This isn't a nihilist movement against nuclear energy, but a profound awakening of civilian society," said Christian Paly, president of the Côtes-du-Rhône winegrowers' union. "The image of *appellation contrôlée* wines and local gastronomic specialities could be damaged by the dump."

Standing next to him was the tanned and elegant Michèle Rivasi. She was in a particularly good mood: the Commission for Independent Radioactivity Research and Information (Crii-Rad), which she set up 11 years ago and headed until recently, had been hired as a consultant on the Marcoule case.

But it was not in that capacity that she was attending the event. "That Rivasi woman", *bête noire* of the nuclear lobby, was no more; step forward Michèle Rivasi, deputy for the Drôme *département*, newly elected on a joint Green and Socialist ticket. She purred as the local brass addressed her as "Madame le député" — 10 years ago, her fiercest enemies were farmers and company bosses.

Crii-Rad, the first independent laboratory in France to carry out radioactive analysis, was the brainchild of a handful of scientists who rebelled against an apparently invincible nuclear lobby. What sparked everything off was a whopping government lie. When a reactor at the Chernobyl nuclear power station blew up during the night of April 25-26, 1986, it produced a huge cloud of highly radioactive particles that spread all over the northern hemisphere and reached eastern France on April 29.

The Central Service for Protection against Ionising Radiation (SCPRI) announced: "In view of the distance and the diminution in time, if anything is detected in France it will be a purely scientific problem."

The cloud hung over the eastern third of France until May 3. Monaco announced increased radioactivity. In Germany and Italy, a ban was slapped on the consumption of fresh milk by children and of green vegetables by anyone. Farmers were promised compensation.

SCPRI stuck to its guns: "We would have to imagine increases 10,000-100,000 times greater than this for there to begin to be significant public health problems." On May 6, the agriculture ministry said: "French territory has been completely spared by the radioactive nuclide fallout resulting from the accident at Chernobyl."

A group of scientists in the Drôme had their doubts. Rivasi's husband, an airline pilot, had gathered disturbing international data. Rivasi herself, a graduate of the Ecole Normale and holder of a degree in biology, decided with some friends to take soil, water and grass samples and get them analysed.

The question was: where? Electricité de France did not carry out analysis for private individuals. SCPRI demanded prohibitive fees and said the analysis would take two weeks. But the information was urgently needed. Eventually Professor Robert Béraud of the Lyon Institute of Nuclear Physics agreed to do the analysis, more out of a concern for scientific accuracy than because he believed anything was amiss. To his amazement the samples turned out to be contaminated with iodine, caesium, ruthenium and other elements.

> **'People lie to us, either deliberately or because of sheer sloppiness'**

Everything moved very fast after that. On May 10 Rivasi and her friends held a press conference in Lyon. Three days later, 100 people decided to form an association, Crii-Rad, which organised an information meeting attended by more than 400 people.

The physicist Roland Desbordes, then an ordinary member, and now Crii-Rad's president, remembers: "There was an extraordinarily violent atmosphere in the hall. People were outraged, they were prepared to go on the rampage. It was then that we got the idea of setting up an independent laboratory. That way we would know the truth."

In July 1986, during the of Aromatic and Medicinal Plants Congress, Crii-Rad urged that suspect products should be withdrawn and producers compensated. The authorities replied that thyme had not been contaminated. To settle the question it was decided that plants gathered in the presence of a bailiff should be analysed by both Crii-Rad and government labs. Both analyses showed contamination.

This was Crii-Rad's first victory. But it still had no money to set up its own lab. The miracle came three months later when Rivasi appeared on Michel Polac's popular television chat show, Droit de Réponse (Right of Reply). She was immensely persuasive. Donations poured in. With the 300,000 francs ($50,000) it managed to raise, Crii-Rad bought its first equipment and set up a lab in a former silk factory lent by a well-wisher near Montélimar.

There was still no money to pay any permanent staff. "I did my analyses at night," Rivasi remembers. Then in 1987 Christian Courbon was taken on. He was paid a pittance and had to work in a fur-lined jacket because of the cold. No member of the team — neither Rivasi herself, nor Corine Castanier, the second person to be taken on, and now the linchpin of the organisation, nor the third employee, biologist Anne-Marie Brun — was a true activist: "I was no more than a not-in-my-back-yard type of ecologist," Courbon says jokingly.

To start with, most orders came from private individuals who wanted the products they produced or consumed — anything from thyme to honey and woodcock — to be analysed. "Unfortunately the hardest hit were those who had the healthiest lifestyles and practised self-sufficiency," says Courbon. Then Rivasi started canvassing elected representatives all over France. Regional, departmental and town councils got Crii-Rad to double-check official data and measurements.

In September 1990 Crii-Rad acquired nationwide notoriety when it revealed the presence of caesium, americium and even plutonium at a dump near the Saclay nuclear research plant on the outskirts of Paris. The authorities indignantly challenged the lab's analytical capabilities. But two months later the Atomic Energy Commission confirmed there was abnormal radioactivity on the site. Saclay's director resigned.

Crii-Rad had won, but faced further financial difficulties. It was saved only by a fresh appeal to members. A reappraisal of the fees it charged showed they were 10 times lower than those charged by the official Nuclear Protection and Safety Institute.

Crii-Rad then revealed excessive radioactivity at the Marie-Curie school in Nogent-sur-Marne, near Paris, which had been built on the site of a laboratory. Once again its figures were disputed; and once again comparison with the results of other labs showed Crii-Rad to be right. Despite persistent risks of contamination, the school remained open. "That kind of thing really gets me down," Rivasi says. "We live in a world where practical considerations take precedence over the health of kids."

Then came the Radiacontrôle scandal. In the industrial zone of Pierrelatte (Drôme), a company specialising in the dismantling of nuclear sites was burning radioactive waste without taking any precautions. Investigations revealed the existence of illegal trafficking in waste and bogus decontamination certificates.

"Wherever we've poked our noses in, we've discovered lies or negligence. You can't imagine how people lie to us, either deliberately or because of sheer sloppiness," says Bruno Chareyron, the nuclear engineer who now runs Crii-Rad. The lab has grown from a tiny team of volunteers to an organisation with a permanent staff of 12, who work with ultra-sophisticated instruments in air-conditioned premises.

Compared with the financially powerful nuclear industry and official monitoring bodies that are kept under a tight government rein, Crii-Rad is no more than a gadfly. But it is an increasingly effective one now that it has become credible.

Those who used to shrug contemptuously now tremble in their boots. Crii-Rad's latest coup came when it was asked by Greenpeace to measure the radioactivity of the discharge pipe at La Hague when it was uncovered by March 11's exceptionally low tide. Its analysis proved that Cogéma, the company which runs the plant, had acted negligently.

"In the early days, people used to dismiss us as jokers or terrorists. Now they say we ask the right questions. The media not only call us up, but read our documentation. We don't need to canvass industrialists any more — big fish like Compagnie Générale des Eaux and Saint-Gobain come to us now," says Desbordes.

But Crii-Rad is not triumphalist. "You can never be certain of victory," say its staff, who were sorry to see Rivasi go. "We'll miss her," says Courbon. "But the important thing is that she'll keep on fighting the good fight higher up the echelons."

(June 19)

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
July 6 1997

Abnegation of nuclear responsibility

EDITORIAL

PITIFUL is the only possible epithet to describe the action by Cogéma, the French company that reprocesses irradiated nuclear fuel: on June 16 it sent divers to confiscate equipment that the environmental organisation Greenpeace was using to check whether the sea had been contaminated by the huge nuclear reprocessing plant at La Hague, at the tip of the Cotentin peninsula in northern France.

Let us leave aside for the moment the unfortunate symbolic overtones of the incident, in which the French state — represented by Cogéma, a subsidiary of the Atomic Energy Commission — was once again on a collision course with Greenpeace.

Unlike what happened 12 years ago in the harbour of Auckland, New Zealand, when French agents sank the Rainbow Warrior, no one died in this latest incident. But the government's arrogance remains undiminished. The message to the general public is that nuclear activity, whether civilian or military, is none of its business.

Dominique Voynet, leader of the Greens and now regional development and environment minister, has stated that there is "nothing abnormal in an independent organisation like Greenpeace performing its watchdog role by sampling discharges". What she might have added is that it is, on the other hand, quite abnormal that the authorities should have so far failed to carry out that task themselves.

It was only in the wake of a controversial article by Professor Jean-François Viel [which was published in the British Medical Journal in January, and which reported a slightly higher than normal incidence of leukaemia in the area around the La Hague plant] that Bernard Kouchner, shortly after being appointed health minister, asked the Office for Protection against Ionising Radiation (Opri) urgently to verify the degree to which the sea floor off La Hague had been contaminated.

It is surprising, to say the least, that Opri now admits it has never before been asked to analyse sediment at the point where La Hague's controversial discharge pipe empties into the sea.

The gist of the ecologists' message is that we must not only protect nature and punish those responsible for pollution, but accept the fact that development carries with it an ever-increasing weight of responsibility. There cannot be an innocent government any more than there can be an innocent company.

(June 19)

Taiwan Fears It Is China's Next Target

Steven Mufson in Chiayi, Taiwan

"SUPPOSE you have a very beautiful daughter," Chen Mao-sung, an independent politician, was telling a crowd of 500 who turned out one sweltering night last week for a "Say No to China" rally here. "And a man with a gun tried to force her to marry him. That's how China wants to force Taiwan to reunify with China."

Moments later, the serious mood turned jubilant as a team of runners arrived carrying an Olympic-style torch that is traveling from the southern end of Taiwan to Taipei, the capital, in the north, where it was to provide a flame for a "Say No to China" demonstration last weekend against forced reunification of this self-governing island with China.

As China takes possession of the British colony of Hong Kong, Beijing's Communist government are saying that the "one country, two systems" formula can be a model for reunification with Taiwan. But the 21 million people of Taiwan are greeting the event with ambivalence, or, in rallies like this one, outright hostility.

"There is no reason to celebrate the loss of 6 million people to the Communist system," said Parris H. Chang, an opposition member of Taiwan's parliament. "I'm ambivalent about the whole thing. It's the end of colonialism, yes. But a people is going to an uncertain future." He also doubts whether the transition will be smooth. "You toss a fine piece of china to an elephant and the elephant doesn't have the skill in handling such a delicate piece of china," Chang said.

"The Hong Kong reversion is no reason to be optimistic," a U.S.-trained Taiwanese lawyer, Tsai Hong-chang, told the crowd in Chiayi last week. "A lot of celebrating is going on in Hong Kong, but . . . it's like being frightened in the dark: You make a lot of noise so you're less frightened."

For much of Taiwan's population, the feeling about the "glorious" handover of Hong Kong to China is more like apathy. Chen Hao, a television executive, said ratings for programs about the Hong Kong handover are consistently low.



Demonstrators chant anti-China slogans at a weekend rally in Taipei PHOTOGRAPH EDDIE SHIH

China's leaders have always considered Taiwan, to which Nationalist forces fled in 1949, a renegade province. With the return of Hong Kong and the Portuguese-administered Macau in 1999, Taiwan remains the one place Beijing longs to make its own.

That's small comfort to Taiwan.

"Until July 1, Hong Kong was a wall that kept China from Taiwan. After July 1, people feel that there will only be a strait left," said Chen, a former journalist and talk-show host. "It will force Taiwan people to face reality, that we're very close to China politically, psychologically and geographically. We are the next Chinese concern."

Hong Kong has been a buffer, and a conduit, between Taiwan and China economically as well as psychologically. Shipping, air travel and trade between the two move first through Hong Kong, even though it often would be easier to sail across the 100-mile-wide waters separating Fujian Province from Taiwan.

That has provided a convenient fig leaf for booming trade between Taiwan and China while the two sides publicly feud. Some 30,000 Taiwanese firms have invested more than $30 billion in China since an unofficial thaw began in the late 1980s. Even China firing missile tests in the waters just off Taiwan last year did little to dampen the trade and investment fever.

Taiwan's trade with China grew to $5.2 billion in the first three months of 1997, up 7.2 percent from the year before, government figures show.

China has long advocated direct links, in an effort to bind Taiwan more closely to China through economic ties. Taiwan's government has resisted because of fears direct investments would make Taiwan vulnerable to Chinese retaliation.

Other convenient fictions will be stripped away once Hong Kong has returned to China. One of those is the Taiwanese ruling Nationalist Party's formal position that reunification is possible, even though Taiwan's President Lee Tung-hui appears to favor continued autonomy if not outright independence.

Andrew Yang, secretary general of the Chinese Council of Advanced Policy Studies in Taipei, said that if the "one country, two systems" plan for Hong Kong succeeds, "Taiwan will gradually be receiving more and more pressures from Beijing and . . . from the world to talk to China about peaceful resolution" of their differences.

China's president and Communist Party general secretary, Jiang Zemin, is doing his best to put Taiwan on the spot. In early 1995, he offered an eight-point plan for better relations. Like other Chinese leaders, he would not rule out force to achieve reunification.

Recently, Jiang secretly offered China's vice presidency to Taiwan's Lee if the latter would make moves toward reunification. Many China analysts say that if Jiang is rebuffed, it will create an opening for more militant leaders.

Wei's Suffering Tempers Hong Kong's Joy

EDITORIAL

WEI JINGSHENG, China's leading dissident, recently was badly beaten in jail by fellow inmates, with the apparent encouragement of his jailers, according to his relatives. The courageous Wei, whose only crime is the peaceful advocacy of democracy, was already suffering from serious medical problems. China's leaders, who have kept him in prison for most of his adulthood, will not grant him access to adequate medical care.

Why raise such an unpleasant subject on the historic occasion of Hong Kong's reversion from Britain to China? The transfer of authority, at midnight on Monday, was understandably a moment of pride for many Chinese, the righting of an imperialist wrong. Many residents of Hong Kong share a national satisfaction in seeing one of their own installed, for the first time, as Hong Kong's chief.

But many in Hong Kong also feel ambivalence about the fact that the new chief, Tung Chee-hwa, was handpicked in Beijing. Hong Kong has evolved into one of the freest societies on earth. China, as Wei's suffering reminds us, has not. Hong Kong's new, Beijing-approved legislature will soon pass new laws on sedition and the protection of state secrets — the very statutes China has used to repress dissent.

This does not mean freedom is about to be snuffed out overnight in Hong Kong. Chinese leaders have promised to respect its autonomy; if they don't, both their own international standing and Hong Kong's economic value to them may be diminished. Tung, though of uncertain commitment to democracy, is a businessman of stature who has selected able lieutenants and who may battle for Hong Kong's independence. The United States and, last weekend, its allies among leading industrialized nations all have pledged vigilance on behalf of Hong Kong's liberty.

Signals from both China and the United States are less clear than the promises themselves. Beijing already has replaced Hong Kong's elected legislature with an easily controlled appointed version and has significantly scaled back civil liberties. President Clinton, while promising support, has never spelled out what might be at stake — presidential summits? China's accession to the World Trade Organization? — if China tramples on Hong Kong's freedoms. Sometimes it seems as if the administration wants to champion human rights without risking goodwill in its relationship with China. This ambiguity is continuing right up through the transfer, as Secretary of State Madeleine Albright announced she would boycott the swearing-in of Hong Kong's new puppet legislature, but then decided to send a high-ranking aide to the event.

Wei has long understood that international pressure can influence China's behavior. When Beijing bid to host the 2000 Olympics, Chinese leaders released him; when the games went elsewhere, he was thrown back in jail. After his recent beating, he told relatives, "The United States and other Western countries have succumbed and stopped criticizing China. China feels it can do whatever it wants to me and other dissidents." The Clinton administration and its allies should do everything they can to ensure that China does not feel emboldened to mistreat Hong Kong's 6 million citizens with the same impunity.

Kobe Police Arrest Child For Killing

Sandra Sugawara in Tokyo

A MONTH ago, a severed head was found in front of a junior high school in Kobe with a chilling note stuck in the 11-year-old male victim's mouth that declared "the beginning of the game. . . . It's great fun for me to kill people. I desperately want to see people die." When police announced last weekend that they had arrested a suspect in the murder, the horror that had gripped this relatively crime-free nation turned to relief — but then to horror again as it was revealed that the suspect is a 14-year-old boy.

Seishi Yamashita, chief investigator, said police questioned the boy and arrested him after he confessed to the crime. According to police, the boy said he beheaded the victim, Jun Hase, with a knife and a saw. Yamashita said police later searched the suspect's home and found the knife and other weapons. The boy told police he knew Hase.

Police declined to identify the suspect and said they were trying to determine the motive for the crime.

Hase's head was discovered on May 27 by a school custodian in front of Tomogaoka Middle School in Kobe, a city of 1.5 million that lies 300 miles west of Tokyo. His body was found later the same day in a forest near his elementary school. The beheading and the taunting note threatening more murders triggered a four-week manhunt involving more than 500 investigators. But while the arrest brought relief that Hase's killer might have been caught, the age of the suspect sparked new anxieties.

A few days before Hase's head was found, two dead kittens turned up — one with severed limbs — near the same school. NHK television reported that police tracked down the suspect after investigating the fate of the cats. Days after Hase's head was found, the killer sent a letter to the Kobe Shimbun newspaper. He blamed "the compulsory education system and the society that created that system that rendered me invisible, and I will exact revenge."

He said he might kill three people a week, and added, "If you assume I am a childish criminal able to kill only the young, you will be grossly mistaken."

Investigators originally thought the killer was aged between 20 and 40, based on descriptions of suspicious persons in the area at the time of the slaying. Hase's murder came two months after two schoolgirls, aged nine and 10, were attacked in the area. The elder one died as a result of her injuries a day later. Many residents feared that the attacks were linked, although no proof has emerged.

Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto had told police to exert every effort to solve the crime. Investigators obtained from video stores lists of customers who often rent horror movies featuring decapitation, and the records of an Internet provider of a home page that contained messages similar to those found in Hase's mouth.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
July 6 1997

Justices Block Doctor-Assisted Suicide

Joan Biskupic

THE BATTLE over the rights of the dying has shifted to the states after last week's unanimous Supreme Court decision that the U.S. Constitution does not guarantee a right to commit suicide with a physician's help.

The court invoked moral and legal arguments in its ruling, acknowledging that the terminally ill can endure great agony, but putting more emphasis on the American tradition of condemning suicide and valuing human life. The ruling upholds laws in New York and Washington states that make it a crime for doctors to give lethal drugs to dying patients who want to more quickly end their lives. The decision overturns a pair of lower-court decisions that had found a constitutional right to die with the aid of a doctor.

Yet while the ruling makes clear that states have a right to ban assisted-suicide, it also left them with the power to legalize the practice. Oregon already has done so, though that law is being challenged in court.

Ruling in the two separate cases, the justices stressed that states have an interest in protecting against potential abuses of society's most vulnerable. They also warned that assisted suicide could undermine the trust of the doctor-patient relationship by blurring the line between healing and harming.

"The state's assisted-suicide ban reflects and reinforces its policy that the lives of terminally ill, disabled, and elderly people must be no less valued than the lives of the young and healthy," Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist wrote as the court took up the question of assisted suicide for the first time.

But in an important concurring opinion, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor left open the possibility that the Supreme Court could someday find that certain individuals who are particularly suffering could have an individual right to assisted suicide.

"Every one of us at some point may be affected by our own or a family member's terminal illness," O'Connor wrote. "There is no reason to think the democratic process will not strike the proper balance between the interests of terminally ill, mentally competent individuals who would seek to end their suffering and the state's interest in protecting those who might seek to end life mistakenly or under pressure."

Last week's paired rulings were arguably the most awaited in a term full of unusually emotional disputes. The subject of assisted suicide has captured the nation's attention — and ambivalences — as advancing medicine has prolonged life but not necessarily made its last days less painful. The issue has divided the medical community, legal scholars and those with most at stake — the terminally ill. And it was personified through the exploits of retired Michigan pathologist Jack Kevorkian, who claims he has helped more than 45 people kill themselves.

Advocates on both sides of the issue predicted a path ahead laden with more controversy and debate.

"The clarity of these decisions should serve as a benchmark for other courts," said Mark Chopko, general counsel for United States Catholic Conference, one of the organizations that has led the fight against assisted suicide. But he added, "the debate over the legalization of assisted suicide will continue in the political process."

Faye Girsh, executive director of the national Hemlock Society, said the 25,000-member organization would continue its decade-old efforts to persuade state legislators to pass "responsible, safeguarded" legislation allowing doctors to help terminally ill patients die.

The Supreme Court first addressed the issue of a right to die in 1990, when it ruled that a person has a constitutionally protected right to refuse unwanted medical treatment. But that involved the rather passive withdrawal of artificial life supports.

Last week's cases posed the more difficult dilemma of whether a physician could take an active role in bringing about a patient's death through lethal injection or other means. The justices unanimously rejected the notion of a fundamental "generalized" right to assisted suicide, such as the one the high court established with the right to die granted in the 1990 case of Cruzan v. Missouri Department of Health. Fundamental rights, like the right to marry and have children, are those that are deeply rooted in the nation's history and tradition.

To find an assisted-suicide right, Rehnquist wrote in Washington v. Glucksberg, would mean a reversal of centuries of legal doctrine and practice, as well as the invalidation of most states' laws against it. He said Anglo-American common law has punished or disapproved of assisting suicide for more than 700 years.



Supreme Court Rejects Internet Censorship Law

John Schwartz and Joan Biskupic

THE First Amendment went digital last week. In a 7-2 decision, the Supreme Court struck down the Communications Decency Act, a law that made it a crime to make "indecent" or "patently offensive" material available to minors over the fast-growing Internet and other computer networks.

The court ruled that constitutional free speech protections apply just as much to online systems as they do to books and newspapers.

Finding that the law was overly vague and would infringe on the speech rights of adults in the name of protecting children, Justice John Paul Stevens wrote that "our cases provide no basis for qualifying the level of First Amendment scrutiny that should be applied to this medium." The law, he wrote, "threatens to torch a large segment of the Internet community."

Civil libertarians and businesses hoping to profit from the Internet were elated by the decision.

Jerry Berman of the Center for Democracy and Technology, a high-tech policy group that helped assemble the coalition of business and civil liberties groups opposing the law, called the decision "the Bill of Rights for the 21st Century."

Sen. Patrick J. Leahy, D-Vermont, who opposed the bill, said: "I hope that nobody thinks that this is a victory for child pornographers. . . . This is a victory for the First Amendment."

But a key sponsor of the original bill, Sen. Dan Coats, R-Indiana, said the Supreme Court was "out of touch with the American people on this. I'm very disappointed."

Former senator Jim Exon, D-Nebraska, first proposed the bill in 1995 to crack down on the online equivalent of open-air porn bazaars: sites from which anyone could download sexually explicit images and even video. The bill's introduction spurred many of those sites to place their raunchiest wares behind electronic doors accessible only with a credit card, and it led to a number of software products that allow parents to filter what their children might find online, though with varying degrees of effectiveness.

The Internet decency law ultimately passed as part of a broad revision of U.S. telecommunications laws in February 1996.

The Supreme Court decision does not affect prohibitions against material found to be "obscene," which is illegal in any form.

But the court said that in trying to shield children, the law went too far to restrict the rights of adults. "We have repeatedly recognized the governmental interest in protecting children from harmful materials," Stevens wrote.

"But that interest does not justify an unnecessarily broad suppression of speech addressed to adults . . . Governmental regulation of the content of speech is more likely to interfere with the free exchange of ideas than to encourage it. The interest in encouraging freedom of expression in a democratic society outweighs any theoretical but unproven benefit of censorship."

As a lower court did when it originally held the law unconstitutional, the Supreme Court found that the technologies of the Internet make it a modern model of the "marketplace of ideas" underlying the Founding Fathers' justification for the First Amendment. "Through the use of chat rooms, any person with a phone line can become a town crier with a voice that resonates farther than it could from any soapbox," Stevens wrote.

Stevens wrote that the very diversity of those technologies made enforcement of the law impossible. There is no effective way, for example, to determine the age of a user tapping into an Internet computer.

A Denial Of Freedom

EDITORIAL

THE STATE of Kansas wants to keep Leroy Hendricks off the streets permanently. There are good reasons to do so. For 40 years has been a sexual predator whose victims are children. He has been convicted five times of molesting boys and girls and served 10 years on the most recent charges.

That sentence was not long enough, but it was the result of a plea bargain made with a prosecutor. If the government's lawyer had gone to trial and won a conviction, Hendricks could have received a sentence as high as 180 years. But having elected to forgo that option, the same prosecutor who made the bargain sought to keep the offender in custody indefinitely.

As Hendricks's release date neared, the prosecutor invoked a new Kansas statute allowing for the continued incarceration of sexually violent predators after their prison terms have been completed.

Last week the Supreme Court found the statute constitutional. It was a 5-4 vote, but three of the dissenting justices also found nothing wrong with civil commitment of persons who have a "mental abnormality" or "personality disorder" and are "likely to engage in predatory acts of sexual violence," so long as they actually receive treatment while in custody.

The Kansas statute affords some protection to the subject of a civil-commitment proceeding, including a right to counsel and a right to call and cross-examine witnesses. The burden of proof is on the state, which must prove its case beyond a reasonable doubt. And the commitment must be reviewed and extended annually.

For what it is, the Kansas law may be the best of its kind. But it still takes away the freedom of a person who has completed his sentences for previous convictions, who is not mentally ill in the sense that term is understood in ordinary civil-commitment law and whose fate hinges on the prediction — the guess? — of a psychiatrist that he will be dangerous in the future.

The court is now at the top of a very slippery slope. In the wake of this decision, state laws setting up special civil-commitment proceedings for certain classes of criminals are likely to proliferate.

It's too early to guess what crimes will be included, but not at all far-fetched to assume that some statutes will reach beyond sexual predators and include all kinds of difficult criminals. It may prove very attractive for prosecutors to accept plea bargains with low sentences, knowing that they have the option to keep an offender in custody long after he completes his term. And though it's hard to imagine its happening in this country, modern history is replete with evidence of the misuse of mental-health proceedings to put dissidents and other troublemakers away indefinitely.

Put criminals away for a long time. But don't use the pretext of caring for the ill to impose life sentences.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
July 6 1997

Wife and Widow to Black Islam

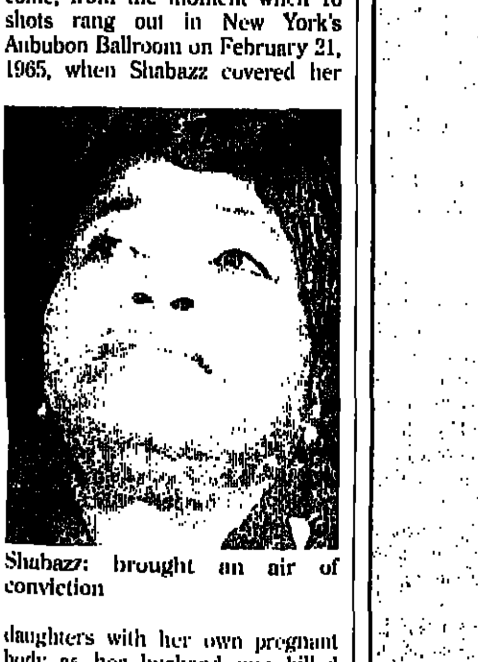
Betty Shabazz

WHEN Betty Shabazz worked up enough nerve to watch Malcolm X, the full-length movie by Spike Lee about her husband, she took one of her daughters to hold her hand.

It was a difficult afternoon. She had to tell herself she was a "big girl." She said she knew she would want to bring even the screen Malcolm home.

What she saw on the screen was a vision of herself as a strong and confident force. It wasn't accurate, she said laughingly soon afterward in a New York hotel suite. "I was not as self-assured as she was," she said of actress Angela Bassett. "I have always wished and dreamed that I could be that smooth."

But the Betty Shabazz of the 1950s and early '60s long ago faded in the powerful light of the mature woman. Bassett played her strong because that's what she had to become, from the moment when 16 shots rang out in New York's Aububon Ballroom on February 21, 1965, when Shabazz covered her daughters with her own pregnant body as her husband was killed before her eyes.


Shabazz: brought an air of conviction

Shabazz, who died last week at 61 from burns she suffered in a fire set by her grandson, was thrust into a miserable but special role in modern black history — she was one of the widows. The deaths of Malcolm X, Medgar Evers and Martin Luther King Jr. tore through the nation. After the men died young, the women emerged to explain and defend the men, and answer the questions. What would Malcolm, Martin, Medgar think of O.J. Simpson, retired Gen. Colin Powell, Bill Clinton's civil rights agenda?

Shabazz built a following of her own in the years since the murder of Malcolm X. She believed deeply in uniting with politically active black women, developed her own proteges and worked hard for political, educational and family causes.

"Many would have been satisfied to have been the wife of a great man who was assassinated. What people forget is that many great men married great women," Eleanor Holmes Norton, a friend for 30 years, said recently.

The three widows, all now with their children raised, their lives at least once immortalized in film, and their family's strong beliefs part of a public conversation, became friends.

"Out of our common tragedy, suffering, our experience as mothers, co-workers, women, we had a lot in common. She saw me as knowing I understood, and I saw her as knowing that she understood. We didn't have to explain, we didn't have to apologize," King said.

Yet the two women didn't dwell in the past but went to spas and ate good dinners. The only time King saw Shabazz weep was during a ceremony two years ago in Washington. "Our daughters gave us the tributes. And her daughter, Ilyasha, spoke of her, and Betty kept looking up at her and the daughter put her arms around her and Betty got emotional. She started talking about how she was thinking she didn't know how to explain to Ilyasha, then 2, about her father's death," King said.

The gentleness and generosity that King describes was felt by others. "I used to go shopping with her and I would have to stop buying because she would fight to pay the bill," recalled C. DeLores Tucker, the president of the National Political Congress of Black Women.

In the hard years right after the assassination, Shabazz retreated from the spotlight, living quietly in a comfortable suburb of New York. She raised six daughters, went back to school and earned a doctorate, and worked for 20 years as a college administrator. Her admirers spoke of her fortitude and her dignity, her sense of humor, the trademark flip hairstyle, her way with a curse word, which she said she learned as a rebuke to the telephone threats during her seven-year marriage to the outspoken Malcolm X.

While the mantle was thrust upon her, she had her own seeds as a fighter. Shabazz grew up in Detroit, daughter of strict, church-going parents. Her mother took her along to picket the local department stores. "I told her I thought I knew where your strength came from. I thought it was Malcolm but it was your mother," said Tucker, recalling a conversation after Shabazz's mother's funeral. "And she said, 'Oh, no, if anything I gave him strength.' "

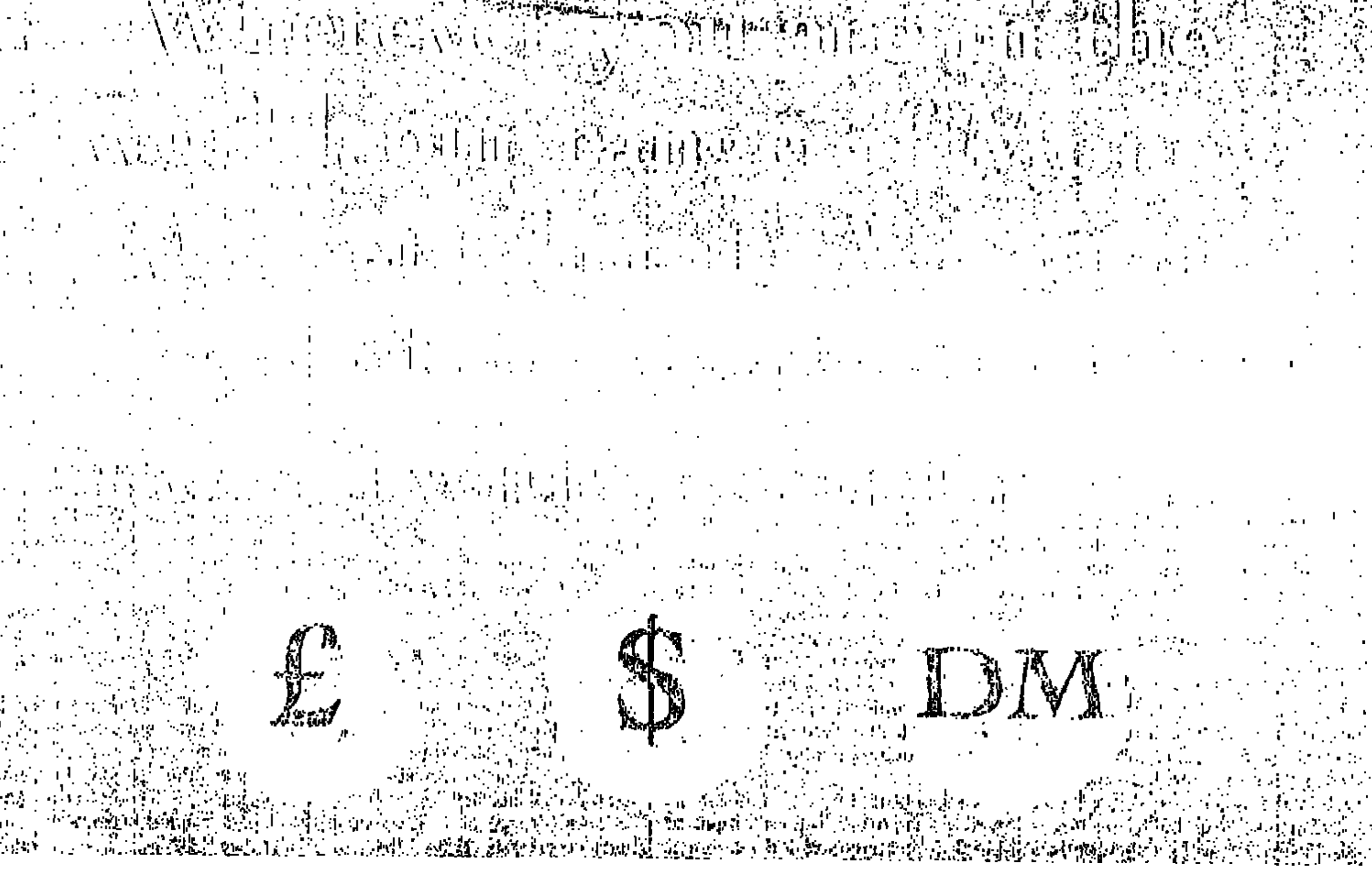
In her public appearances of recent years, Shabazz was philosophical about the difficult times.

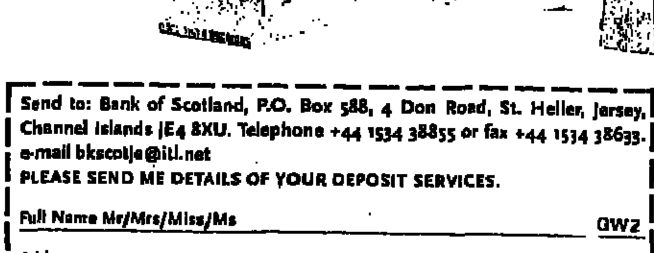
Howard Dodson, director of Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, remembers a speech that she gave at a homeless shelter in New York. "She wanted to communicate a triumphant vision. That things were possible, that you can take charge of your life, you can confront and transcend these problems. She brought an air of conviction," he said.

And she gave two visions: the one of Malcolm X and the one of a woman reaching out and fighting the odds.

Jacqueline Trescott

Betty Shabazz, civil rights leader; born May 28, 1936; died June 23, 1997







President Clinton addressing the U.N. Earth Summit last week PHOTOGRAPH: JON LEVY

Clinton Evades U.S. Gas Pledge

John F. Harris and Joby Warrick

PRESIDENT Clinton last week warned that human activity is dangerously increasing Earth's temperature, but he rebuffed hopes by European leaders that he offer a specific target for reducing "greenhouse gases" in the next decade.

A day after he cheered environmetalists by unveiling tough regulations to reduce urban smog, he angered many of the same advocates by dodging the issue of how much and how fast to reduce gas emissions under global treaty negotiations that are to be concluded in December.

Clinton, speaking to a special session of the U.N. General Assembly, acknowleged that the United States produces 20 percent of greenhouse gases — more than any other country, even though it has just 4 percent of the population.

And he offered a number of pledges, including a promise to mobilize U.S. public opinion behind legally binding global targets for reducing emissions and a proposal to install one million solar roofs in the United States by 2010.

But Clinton hedged on the critical question of pollution targets for greenhouse gases — excess carbon dioxide produced by factory smokestacks and automobile exhaust pipes.

The European Union has proposed requiring a 15 percent reduction in greenhouse gases by 2010. Even as Clinton applauded the group for "its strong focus on this issue," his aides dismissed that proposal as unrealistic and vowed that Clinton had no intention of announcing targets until he was certain they were attainable. This skepticism about the European position is shared even by some environmentalists pressing Clinton to be more specific.

Clinton did promise he would produce an "American commitment to realistic and binding limits" on greenhouse gases in time for an international conference in December in Kyoto, Japan.

Environmental groups applauded Clinton's strong words on global warming, but some condemned his lack of specific targets for cutting greenhouse gas emissions. The version of the speech delivered by the president omitted a reference in the written text to a vague goal of eventually reducing pollution below 1990 levels.

Responding to that omission as well as reported U.S. attempts to block a strongly worded statement on climate change at the conclusion of the Earth Summit, Kevin Dunion of Friends of the Earth said, "That kind of hypocrisy makes us believe quite frankly that the Americans will not arrive in Kyoto with real, binding targets."

Environmentalists also were skeptical of the "million solar roofs" program. "I can't say it doesn't sound good, but it doesn't get the job done," said Michael Oppenheimer, a scientist for the Environmental Defense Fund.

Critics on the president's right were no more charitable. "I am particularly concerned that the draft treaty now under discussion imposes mandatory restrictions on the United States, but only recommendations for emerging industrial powers," said Rep. Benjamin A. Gilman, R-New York, chairman of the House International Relations committee.

But some business leaders said the president took a sensible approach. "He resisted the temptation to use this highly public event to unveil draconian measures that would be harmful to our economy and harmful to the American people," said Gail McDonald, president of the Global Climate Coalition, an organization of business trade groups.

Business groups have lobbied the administration in recent weeks, arguing that the kinds of pollution cuts urged by the Europeans are unrealistic and would wreck the American economy. But other analysts disagree.

Some European governments, notably Germany and Britain, have achieved dramatic reductions in emissions of carbon dioxide in the past decade, although both countries benefited from special circumstances. Britain, for example, began relying more heavily on cleaner natural gas after then-Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher privatized the nation's coal industry.

A wide range of U.S. scientists and economists agree that the United States could achieve similar reductions, although they differ on the economic consequences. One recent analysis predicted the country could save $58 billion in energy costs and generate nearly 800,000 net new jobs by converting to cleaner, renewable energy sources.

Five years ago in Rio de Janeiro, a world conference on the environment set goals for reducing emissions, but the goals went largely unmet. Administration officials have said this experience has led the administration to press for legally binding targets as well as for a treaty that includes developing nations.

China, for instance, is already second to the United States in producing greenhouse gases.

But many developing nations fear limits would stunt economic growth. To address this concern, Clinton said the United States would direct about $1 billion in international aid money to developing countries for clean-air energy products.

In the fall, Clinton will also host a White House Conference on Climate Change, where, aides said, he will try to forge a consensus among scientists and business leaders about what the U.S. position in Kyoto should be.

Overcrowded El Salvador Facing Ecological Disaster

Douglas Farah in San Salvador

THROUGHOUT the 1980s, El Salvador's civil war was a focus of international attention and billions of dollars poured into the country to support the military that was battling a Marxist-led insurgency.

Now El Salvador, although at peace and out of the international spotlight, is facing a more common problem that threatens more permanent damage than the war: ecological devastation that is turning parts of the once-lush country to desert, causing a severe water shortage and making respiratory disease from air pollution a leading cause of death among children.

And, Salvadorans complain, there is almost no outside aid available to combat the threat because the United States and other nations do not feel their strategic interests are directly threatened.

"Our ground water is running out, our surface water is increasingly polluted, and we have less than 2 percent of our forest cover left," said Ricardo Navarro, director of the Salvadoran Center for Appropriate Technology, a prominent ecology group here. "The most dangerous thing a child can do in El Salvador is breathe. We will have to take radical measures if we want El Salvador to live."

El Salvador now ranks just behind Haiti as the Western Hemisphere's most deforested country. Only about 1.5 percent of its tropical forest cover is left, and about 7 percent more of the land is protected only somewhat by coffee trees. Even these trees are disappearing at an alarming rate, environmental experts said.

At the same time, Navarro warned, "water is a serious problem, and it will only get worse. . . . Just in the capital, the subterranean water supplies drop a meter [39 inches] a year, and sooner or later those aquifers will run dry."

Unlike other nations in Central America, El Salvador has no undeveloped frontier because its small territory has long been occupied from corner to corner. But like the rest of the region, more than 30 percent of the people live in extreme poverty.

Much of the current crisis stems from El Salvador being the most densely populated country in the hemisphere, with about 413 people per square mile.

Deborah Barry, director of the Salvadoran Program of Investigation of Development and the Environment (PRISMA), said the problem of population density is particularly serious in the San Salvador urban area. According to a 1995 PRISMA study — widely regarded as the most reliable to date — the urban area has 30 percent of the nation's population, with 978 people per square mile.

"The state of the Salvadoran environment and its ongoing degradation are a threat to the economic and political stability of the nation," the PRISMA study said. "It is a serious impediment to future development."

In part, too, the war is to blame for the current crisis. Tens of thousands of people, mostly subsistence farmers, were driven from their homes along the northern border with Honduras, areas where the fighting was most ferocious. Most migrated toward towns and urban centers.

Those who remained in rural areas, and those who have returned, Barry said, have to clear more land than before because the soil is poor. In addition, most fuel is unavailable or extremely expensive, leaving wood the cheapest and most available means of cooking. The deforestation accelerates soil erosion, which in turn causes rivers to fill with sediment, killing water life.

"There is serious desertification setting in in some parts of the country," Barry said. "That leaves behind land that is no longer recoverable for mankind's use."

The nation's river ways and ground water are fouled further by unregulated dumping of industrial waste and garbage, often toxic. And deforestation, especially close to urban areas, is accelerated because there are no codes regulating how land should be used. In recent months several of the few remaining stands of trees on the hills around the capital have been razed to make room for apartments and commercial buildings.

Environmental experts say another growing problem is the inability of urban centers, especially San Salvador, to dispose of garbage in an environmentally sound way. At the main dump, near the suburb of Nejapa, the garbage is piled in huge mounds, where poor people fight with each other and clouds of vultures over the right to scavenge.

According to the PRISMA study the San Salvador metropolitan area generates 1,255 tons of garbage a day, of which only 37 percent is collected. The garbage that is collected is thrown on porous, volcanic soil where it decomposes and filters into the water table.

UNCOLLECTED garbage is dumped directly into streams and rivers, further fouling them, or left to rot in piles, also posing a health hazard.

Reforestation is difficult, with wood so scarce and valuable. Environmental workers say trees are stolen, or cut as soon as they are big enough to burn.

In recognition of the growing problem, the government recently created the Ministry of the Environment to prepare legislation on emission control standards, rational land use and control of water use and pollution.

"There simply are very few laws now, and those that exist are not enforced," said a foreign environmental expert. "We are looking at years, maybe a generation, before things even begin to turn around, and by then it may be too late."

Despite the fanfare with which the ministry was announced, it has almost no budget, little staff and no institutional framework within which to work.

With a vastly reduced aid budget, the United States is assisting ecological protection efforts.

Without the resources to carry out large-scale projects, U.S. aid is focusing on smaller ones, such as a turtle hatchery to try to control consumption of the eggs that are a popular delicacy here.

But the broader question is how to halt environmental collapse. Barry and other experts said the only way to slow the deforestation is to, in effect, pay farmers not to cut trees.

World Bank in surprise policy U-turn

Charlotte Denny

IN AN astonishing volte-face, the World Bank in Washington has abandoned its long-running support for minimal government in favour of a new model based on a strong and vigorous state.

Its latest report on world development*, published last week, calls for "reinvigoration of public institutions" and says the role of government has been vital in making possible the "dazzling growth" of East Asia. "An 'effective state' is the cornerstone of successful economies; without it, economic and social development is impossible," says the report. "Good government is not a luxury [but] a vital necessity for development."

The bank says an effective state "harnesses the energy of private business and individuals, and acts as their partner and catalyst, instead of restricting their partnership".

With the collapse of the communist economies and the crisis in welfare spending in the industrial world, the role of the state is in the spotlight around the globe, it adds.

"For many, the lesson of recent years has been that the state could not deliver on its promise," said the bank's president, James Wolfensohn. "Many have felt that the logical endpoint of all of this was the minimalist state. The report explains why this extreme view is at odds with the evidence of the world's development success stories."

But the bank itself has been identified with policies that have seen developing nations cut essential government services to try to balance their books. Aid recipients must meet stringent budget targets under its structural adjustment policies.

The bank now says that building an effective state is vital for development. It lists key tasks of government as including investing in basic social services and infrastructure, providing a welfare safety net, protecting the environment and establishing a foundation of law.

Chief economist Joseph Stiglitz said the bank now believed markets and governments were complementary. "The state is essential for putting in place the appropriate institutional foundations for markets," he said.

The irony of this U-turn was not lost on many of the bank's critics. The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) said the bank had toured the globe during the 1980s recommending the paring down of government, the civil service, education and health services in the developing world.

Bill Jordan, leader of the Brussels-based ICFTU, welcomed the change of heart, but he added: "I regret that public institutions, public morale and essential services like health and education had first to be considerably eroded before the World Bank could come round to its current view."

For its report, the bank surveyed businesspeople around the world and found that the countries that scored low marks for government effectiveness also suffered from low growth. "Many countries lack the basic institutional foundations for markets to grow," the report says.

Corruption and crime emerged as serious problems. The bank found countries with high levels of corruption had low investment and growth. The report says the consequences of bribery do not end with paying off the officials and then getting on with business: "Government arbitrariness entangles firms in a web of time-consuming and economically wasteful negotiations."

*The State in a Changing World; The World Development Report, 1997 (The World Bank)

German boardrooms face up to Nazi past

Unsavoury company secrets are coming to light. **Ian Traynor** reports from Bonn

ON THE last day of October 1940, just over a year after Hitler invaded Poland, the Berlin office of Degussa, the German precious metals firm, wrote to the mayor of the Nazi-controlled Jewish ghetto in Lodz, south of Warsaw.

"Unfortunately, you have not yet replied to our offer to make use of the gold and silver of Jewish origin," the missive read. "When can we expect delivery of the material?"

In correspondence two weeks earlier, the same office told the mayor: "We will smelt the material here and check it for exact gold and silver content."

Degussa was and remains Germany's biggest smelter of precious metals. Its role in the processing of "Nazi gold" has long been known. But after decades of denial and evasion, the company admitted only last month what is clear from the 1940 correspondence — that it was engaged in reprocessing the coins, valuables and jewellery plundered from Europe's Jews.

Secret papers in the United States unearthed recently by an eastern German television team also contend that Degussa handled gold the Nazis extracted from the teeth of corpses in the concentration camps. "It's a possibility," admitted a Degussa executive, Michael Jansen, but there was no proof.

In a sudden fit of glasnost, Degussa is starting to come clean on its dirty past. Why? Genuine remorse or commercial self-interest?

Degussa's three biggest shareholders recently divested themselves of their holdings in the 154-year-old Frankfurt-based firm. Then Düsseldorf researcher Hersch Fischler unearthed the Lodz ghetto letters. But the biggest factor concentrating the minds in German industry is the drip-feed of new revelations about the second world war coming mainly from the United States, the disastrous publicity they bring, and the risk of expensive lawsuits and compensation claims.

As researchers and Jewish organisations dig deeper into declassified US material and into the archives of post-communist Russia and eastern Europe, scandals of the type that have exploded in Switzerland are waiting to detonate under the tables of German boardrooms.

In a pre-emptive strike, Mr Jansen promised that Degussa would co-operate with the World Jewish Congress and had commissioned independent researchers to examine the archives. He went beyond claiming that Degussa was pressured into collaboration to admit, as the correspondence shows, that it was actively bidding to handle Nazi loot.

Whatever the reasons for the new frankness, Degussa finds itself in good company. Corporate Germany is, to variable degrees, coming clean on the war years.

The firms involved do not come any bigger. Allianz, the country's biggest insurer; Volkswagen, Europe's biggest car-maker; Daimler-Benz, Germany's biggest company; Deutsche Bahn, the national railway; and Deutsche Bank, the largest commercial bank, have all recently been in the throes of reviewing their histories to answer that most unsettling question: what did you do during the war?

Executives at Allianz's Munich headquarters, no doubt influenced by the opening in New York last month of a lawsuit against them and six other insurance companies over Jewish wartime insurance losses, have set up a "Holocaust hotline", which victims' relatives can call to ask about claims.

Like Degussa, Allianz has commissioned outside historians to illuminate the war years. The compensation sums mentioned in connection with the lawsuit range from $1 billion to $7 billion, a figure that the Allianz chairman, Henning Schulte-Noelle, described as "completely unrealistic".

A 1990 Allianz company history skated over the firm's profitable line of business covering the concentration camp buildings at Auschwitz and Dachau, among others, or in pocketing the proceeds from forfeited life assurance policies of Jews who were deported or emigrated from Nazi Germany. Collaboration, it said, was purely to protect the company from worse. A 1993 Degussa history displayed similar amnesia.

Smelting precious metals at Degussa EPA

Dresdner Bank, Germany's second-largest commercial bank, is known to have been the preferred banker of the SS, the Nazi party's élite corps. Its recent 125-year jubilee celebrations were the occasion for reflection on a grand history without excessive dwelling on Hitler's 12-year heyday.

Daimler and Volkswagen have generally been more forthcoming on their wartime roles, and Daimler, in particular, has been more generous in paying out compensation. Volkswagen commissioned the historian, Hans Mommsen, now at Oxford university, to write a history of its wartime role. At a Frankfurt conference in May, Mr Mommsen rebutted claims that the captains of German industry were forced to collaborate.

"It cannot be said that the employment of forced labourers and concentration camp inmates was imposed on the company management. On the contrary, Volkswagen enjoyed considerable scope and many of its own initiatives led to the conclusion that it functioned as an active accomplice of the regime."

By 1942, two-thirds of its workforce was non-German, overwhelmingly slave labour.

A study of Daimler-Benz by the American Neil Gregor, carried out with the company's help and to be published later this year, is expected to confirm that Daimler lobbied to employ slave labour and camp inmates. "Apologetic assertions that management acted under the pressure of wartime economic necessities are wide of the mark," said Mr Mommsen.

The list goes on. The Bonn historian, Klaus Hildebrand, is about to bring out a history of Deutsche Bahn, the national railway, highlighting the central role played by its predecessor, the Reichsbahn, in the logistics of the Holocaust, and asserting that because of the numbers employed on the railways, ordinary German awareness of the Holocaust was much more extensive than claimed.

While the key role played by the chemicals company I G Farben in slave labour and mass slaughter is well known, the US researcher, Peter Hayes, told the Frankfurt conference that several prominent chemicals and pharmaceuticals firms — Schering, Merck, Henkel and other defunct companies — had yet to open up, although a French scholar is researching Berlin-based Schering.

Harold James of Princeton university, who detailed Deutsche Bank's profitable dealings in reselling seized Jewish businesses in a 1995 history, said: "It is remarkable that among the old German élites, there were soldiers, diplomats, officials, and, to a certain extent also church figures engaged in resistance — but hardly a single businessman or banker."

In Brief

BRITAIN'S trade gap with the rest of the world widened to $1.65 billion in May despite a record-breaking month for UK exporters.

THE Serious Fraud Office is to investigate the $148 million black hole of losses discovered at NatWest Bank's City trading division.

RESEARCH and development spending by UK industry is the lowest of all the G7 countries, except Italy which shares bottom place in the league table with just 2.3 per cent of sales being reinvested in R&D. Canada topped the survey with 10.8 per cent.

THE UK government has blocked Bass's $330 million takeover of rival brewer Carlsberg-Tetley on the grounds that it was against the public interest and would lead to higher beer prices.

THE UK economic Secretary Helen Liddell has threatened pensions companies with the imposition of tough sanctions if they don't move speedily to compensate employees who were wrongly advised to switch pensions.

DISGRACED property tycoon Jürgen Schneider has admitted fraudulently securing billions of deutschmarks of loans at the start of a trial in Frankfurt that is expected to be the biggest fraud case in German history.

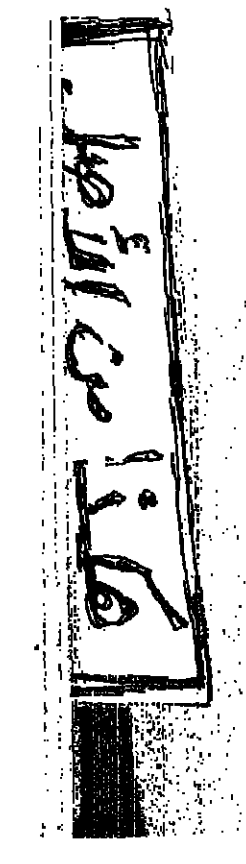
THE scandal engulfing Japan's financial sector deepened when three leading brokerages — Daiwa, Nikko and Yamaichi — were accused of funnelling profits from illegal trades to Ryuichi Koike, the corporate racketeer arrested last month.

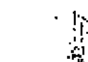
LONRHO, the mining and trading conglomerate, called off merger talks with JCI, the black South African-run mining group, which would — if completed — have created a $3 billion mining colossus.

FOREIGN EXCHANGES

	Sterling rates June 30	Sterling rates June 23
Australia	2.2199-2.2233	2.2099-2.2127
Austria	20.39-20.41	20.16-20 18
Belgium	59 78-59 88	59.09-59 20
Canada	2 2949-2.2971	2.3109-2.3131
Denmark	11.03-11.04	10.91-10 92
France	9.76-9.77	9.66-9.67
Germany	2.8988-2.9014	2.8651-2 8680
Hong Kong	12.88-12.90	12.89-12.89
Ireland	1.1021-1.1042	1.0992-1.1035
Italy	2,830-2,833	2,802-2,806
Japan	190.32-190 56	192.06-192.30
Netherlands	3.2591-3.2027	3.2231-3 2265
New Zealand	2.4540-2.4573	2.4342-2.4375
Norway	12.17-12.19	12.05-12 08
Portugal	292.39-292.73	288.80-280.34
Spain	244.01-244 02	241.93-242.12
Sweden	12.85-12.87	12.82-12 84
Switzerland	2.4250-2.4270	2.3856-2.3883
USA	1.6638-1.6648	1.6638-1.6646
ECU	1 4751-1.4772	1.4608-1.4651

FTSE100 Share index up 29.8 at 4604.6. FTSE 250 index down 23.6 at 4431.3. Gold down $5.75 at $336.75.







First astronaut of inner space

OBITUARY
Jacques-Yves Cousteau

EVERYONE seems to carry favourite images of Jacques-Yves Cousteau, who has died aged 87. The lined face, the red woolly hat, the lean, leathery man of the sea at the helm of Calypso: the persuasive adventurer with a strangely sad voice, luring viewers into the wonder of undersea life; the assured, even arrogant, commercial entrepreneur; the television innovator; the environmentalist, prompting the world's leaders to take responsibility for the future of the planet.

Yet, even collectively, these provide only facets of Cousteau the media personality, rather than of Jacques-Yves himself. For the adventurous Captain — or Commander (Legion d'Honneur) as he later became — was a private man who rarely revealed his deepest thoughts.

Brushing with death many times, he carried a lifelong regret that he never achieved his early ambition to become a stunt pilot. This was mainly because of physical problems and injury, sustained in the thirties, when he barely survived a car crash.

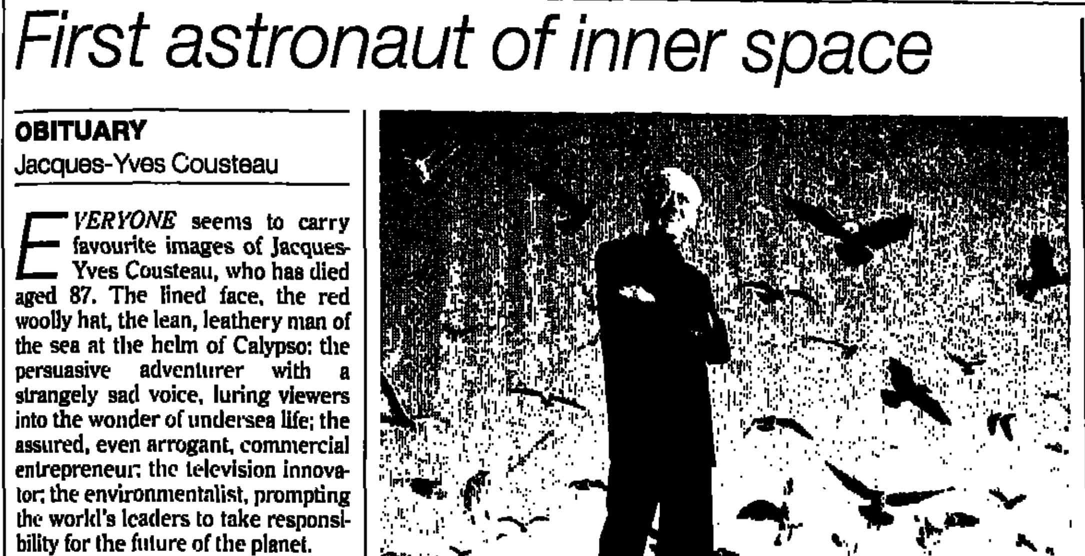
Freed by the neutral buoyancy of his aqua-lung (perfected with Emile Gagnan and patented) Cousteau declared himself to be the world's first astronaut of inner space. He went on to open the world's eyes to the richness, fragile elegance and vulnerability of life in the seas. He did more than any other to open these sensitive regions up to a sometimes damaging human invasion.

Cousteau never whole-heartedly embraced the cause of environmental science and towards the end of his life, in spite of having founded underwater archaeology as a serious science, was regarded largely as a showman by professional oceanographers.

Yet the opening sequence of The Silent World, with the torches of its undersea explorers descending into the blackness of the deep — filmed by Cousteau in 1956 and a winner of the Cannes Grand Prix — was an experience of such deep inner spirituality that it seemed almost religious. A beacon of enormous power for good was switched on.

Cousteau revelled in his gifts for innovation, and in the excitement of dreaming up new visualisations of reality. Somehow he managed to combine the wonder and curiosity of a child with the skills of an innovative engineer.

Some of this is in his background. Cousteau was the third son of a lawyer who, before the first world war, worked for an American francophile millionaire and, after that war, for "the richest and handsomest unmarried New Yorker". The children were brought up in an environment in which large yachts and long journeys were the norm. Cousteau's childhood was dominated by a fascination for the sea.



Cousteau's world . . . he opened our eyes to the sea's richness

He learnt to swim and dive but his car accident led to further serious therapeutic swimming — and his first realisation of the hidden richness of underwater life.

Underwater photography became almost an obsession, shared by Simone Melchior, the daughter of a wealthy family, whom he married in 1937.

THE second world war found him trapped in Toulon as gunnery officer in the French Navy, leaving him fairly free to investigate scuba-diving. But it was not until he met Emile Gagnan in 1942 that the aqualung began to take shape. In 1945 these activities led to the establishment of the French Navy's Underwater Research Group, with Cousteau as its commanding officer.

During the war the activities also served as a cover for intelligence and resistance operations. Among his single-handed sorties, Cousteau entered the Axis Naval HQ at Toulon, where he photographed secret documents that were of substantial value to the Allies.

But Jacques's brother, Pierre, who had leaned ever more to the right, was appointed as puppet editor-in-chief of Paris Soir and, after VE day, was named as a collaborator. He was tried and sentenced to death. Eventually, the court commuted the sentence. Pierre, released after 12 years, died early of cancer.

These tragedies lay in the background as Jacques-Yves led the Underwater Research Group, dealt with mines, invented underwater lighting of unprecedented power and developed techniques for colour cine photography.

Two decades later, his own family encountered tragedy as his son Philippe, an accomplished flyer, began to take over the Cousteau enterprises in the 1970s, making great use of an old Catalina flying boat — the Flying Calypso — as a platform for expeditions and photography. Returning from a test flight in 1979, the aircraft inexplicably broke up on landing and Philippe was killed.

Cousteau became increasingly dependent on the great organising abilities of his surviving son, Jean-Michel, to maintain the Cousteau image. But there was growing public criticism of the almost circus-like nature of the later expeditions, of the abuse of marine mammals and exploitation of primitive people.

His wife Simone died in 1990 and in 1992 he married Francine Triplet. Yet he had written that adventurers should never marry, for they cannot devote enough time to family responsibilities. He also said that, whenever he met people who were very serious about their work, he would burst into laughter.

Anthony Tucker

Jacques-Yves Cousteau, oceanographer, born June 11, 1910; died June 25, 1997

Teenage turmoil

Teenagers may not be the same across Europe but their troubles are, writes **Frances Rickford**

WHEN ministers from 41 European nations — including Britain's social services minister, Paul Boateng — met in Vienna last month to discuss how governments should be supporting adolescents and their families, there was a clear consensus: parenting teenagers is a more difficult job now than in the recent past.

Several other common themes emerged from the Council of Europe conference. Parental divorce, drugs and alcohol, and youth unemployment were all seen as threatening adolescents' well-being, but there were also striking differences in the concerns of different governments — and, apparently, in the outlook and behaviour of teenagers across the continent.

Almost every country reported a rising divorce rate and a growing proportion of children, especially teenagers, living in single parent families and step families, but none suggested the trend towards diverse family forms could, or should, be reversed.

In Norway, where divorce rates and the proportion of children living with one parent is similar to the UK, the government has taken the view that divorce or separation need not, and should not, mean that children's bonds with either parent are weakened. A new Marriage Act compels all couples with children under 16 to use a mediation service before they separate or divorce. The point is not to try to save the marriage, but to enable the parents to agree on arrangements for the children.

Labour market changes and high rates of unemployment have meant that young people in many countries are staying in full-time education and living at home with their parents longer than in previous generations. But parenting styles have also become less authoritarian across Europe, with children taking more decisions about their lives at an earlier age, and also learning to look after themselves earlier because both parents work full-time. Several countries identified a tension between this autonomy and the fact that young people remain financially dependent on their families until well into their 20s.

Illegal drugs top the list of parents' worries about their children, although tobacco and alcohol are much more widespread. Smoking among teenagers is increasing in many countries, although in Germany and Denmark it is falling. In the Netherlands, a majority — and a rising proportion — of young people start smoking regularly from age 12, according to a Dutch government report to the conference, and about one in four aged 16 has used hashish, which is legal. But hard drug use among Dutch teenagers is very low, with less than 1 per cent ever having used heroin or cocaine.

Adolescents in eastern European countries are having to cope with new levels of unemployment and poverty within their families and the effects of dramatic social and political change during their formative years, which is believed to have led to deep disenchantment and alienation. Meanwhile several Western countries identified "foreigners" as an issue their young people were worried about, although in most cases the threat from immigrants was perceived as much less important than environmental dangers.

In Austria, one teenager in 10 subscribes to "a radical rightwing philosophy", according to official studies. Five per cent are paid up members of neo-Nazi groups, while a much higher proportion of young people have racist or xenophobic attitudes towards minorities, and routinely talk about using violence against foreigners.

Mental health problems and self-harm are also perceived to be on the increase. In the Netherlands, nearly one in 10 is believed to have a mental health problem, and 5.7 per cent of young people have made one or more suicide attempt. And, as in the UK, young men are more vulnerable than young women.

More pressing for northern Europeans was the question of what governments needed to do to support and help the parents of teenagers. Norway, again, is ahead of the field with a free, national family counselling service, based on self-referral. Other countries, like Britain, seem to rely on a combination of safety-net services for families already having obvious difficulties, self-help groups and local "experiments".

One issue that obviously struck a chord with many of the ministers was adolescents' own complaint, reported by researchers, that their parents just don't spend enough time with them. Paul Boateng confessed to the conference that his five children had almost choked on their cornflakes when he told them he was disappearing for three days to discuss better parenting.

Bright and dutiful, page 27

CLASSIFIED



ILLUSTRATION: BARRY LARKING

Runway to destruction

Paul Evans

THE BOLLIN Valley is an enchanting area of countryside made even more remarkable for being on the outskirts of Manchester. Valued as a refuge, for wildlife and people, from the sprawling industrial and post-industrial landscapes in northwest England, this area came under threat some years ago from proposals by Manchester airport to build a second runway that would obliterate ponds, woods, fields and historic buildings and blight the lives of local people.

After years of protest and a public inquiry, the runway has finally been given the go-ahead. Towards the end of the campaign, direct-action protesters moved into the runway site building protest camps on the ground, in the trees and a network of underground tunnels. Manchester airport quickly became a *cause célèbre* of environmental action, broadening the earlier focus from roads to air transport and the environmental damage it produces. After a valiant resistance, the last of the protesters was evacuated from the site last month. Now another sort of evacuation is taking place.

As part of the so-called "mitigation" package agreed for the construction project, a number of habitats will be created. Ponds will be dug away from the new runway to provide homes for rare amphibians — the nationally protected great-crested newts — before their original habitats are trashed. Other woodland and grassland habitats are also promised to compensate for those to be lost. New lamps for old.

Such mitigation measures aim to preserve biological diversity through environmental economics. The living components of nature are regarded as a resource — natural capital. Driven by the "what's it worth?" imperative, wildlife and habitats are valued for their usefulness to people. Consequently, when there's a conflict, scientific interest — as something abstract and arcane — gets traded off for more pressing human benefit. Newts and wee beasties with unpronounceable names, versus retail parks, bypasses, quarries, airport runways. Conservation versus enterprise.

Sustainable development is concerned with preventing the decline of human welfare over time by maintaining the stock of capital assets for the benefit of future generations. In environmental economics, the natural environment — the "stock" of ecosystems, habitats, species and genetic diversity — must be valued in the same way as human-made capital such as machinery, infrastructure and knowledge. The trade-off between the two is supposed to maintain the stock of assets that makes development sustainable. All this horsetrading is contingent on the fragile security of the technology, social conditions and cultural needs that enable the economic value of natural capital to be realised, so planting trees and digging a few new ponds for the newts is supposed to maintain the stock of assets for the future.

But all this misses the most important point. At Manchester airport and elsewhere, what is being lost is the particular, the individual, the unique. These ponds and woods and fields have developed naturally over centuries to form intricate communities of wildlife, each one unique. Within these complex webs of relationships it seems daft to single out some species for protection on the grounds of rarity and destroy the other species on which they depend because they're common.

The notion that mitigation provides for the continuity of these assets is a con. These unique and irreplaceable habitats are being traded for fakes and facsimiles. Why not then replace the National Gallery with a CD-Rom of its collection of paintings? Why not build replica cathedrals and bulldoze the medieval originals to make shopping malls? Imagine the outcry.

Chess Leonard Barden

LONDON'S Agency Club, close to Trafalgar Square, hosted an unusual IM tournament last month. Half the 10 invitees were women, and the event celebrated the centenary of the first "international ladies' tournament", which opened in London on June 23, 1897.

A patronising report in the 1897 British Chess Magazine claimed that "many of the women were evidently nervous. The use of the clocks was plainly a heavy burden on some of their minds, and the scoring sheet and pencil were regarded somewhat askance." The winner, Mary Rudge, scored a Fischeresque 18½/19, and, wrote the BCM, was "entitled to style herself lady chess champion of the world".

Current record books list Vera Menchik in 1927 as the first champion, and Rudge, whose opponents came from eight countries, is unjustly forgotten.

The BCM condemned move six in this game by the runner-up Mrs Fagan ("an active worker in the cause of women's emancipation, and a member of the Fabian Society") as "altogether unsound", but 20 years later it was the great Alekhine's favourite. Fagan's thematic dark-square attack shows how to defeat a passive opponent.

Fagan v Richmond, 1897

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bg5 Be7 5 e5 Nfd7 6 h4!? Bxg5 7 hxg5 Qxg5 8 Nf3 Qe7 9 Bd3 a6 10 Qd2 c5 11 dxc5 Nc6 12 0-0-0 Qxc5 13 Qg5 g6 14 Rh4 Qe7 15 Qg3 b5 16 Rdh1 Nf8 17 Rf4 Bb7 18 Bxb5! h6 19 Bxc6+ Bxc6 20 Rfh4 h5 21 Rf4 Kd8 22 Ng5 Be8 23 Rd1 Nd7 24 Rfd4 f5 25 exf6 Qxf6 26 Re1 Nf8 27 Qd6+ Resigns.

Honouring these pioneers, Labour MPs Angela and Maria Eagle presented the prizes at Agency 1997; the twins are both former England girl internationals. In the play, the women almost held their own against higher-rated men, while Antoaneta Stefanova, aged 18, of Bulgaria, who recently scored a men's GM norm in Hawaii, won this brevity.

Stefanova v Tozer

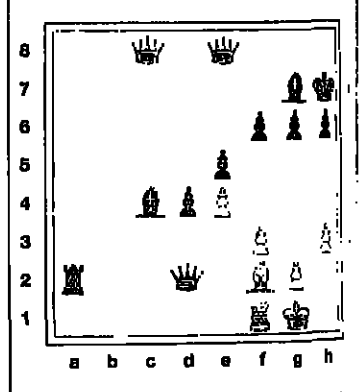
1 d4 f5 2 c4 fxe4 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bg5 e6 5 Nxe4 Be7 6 Bd3 Nxe4 7 Bxe7 Nxf2? 8 Qh5+ Kxe7 9 Qh4+ Kf7 10 Qxf2+ Qf6 11 Nf3 Rf8 12 0-0 Kg8 13 Qg3 g6 14 Ne5 Qg7 15 Rxf8+ Qxf8 16 Rf1 Qg7 17 Qg5 Resigns.

Stefanova looked like scoring the tournament's fastest win until Luke McShane, who tied for first prize and, at age 13, notched up his fifth IM norm, was quicker still in the final round. His 14 Qh5 threatens 15 Bg5 as well as the knight.

McShane v Castagliola

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 Nd4 4 Nxd4 exd4 5 0-0 Qh4 6 d3 Bc5 7 Nd2 Ne7 8 e5 Ng6 9 Ne4 Be7 10 Ng3 Nxe5 11 Nf5 Qf6 12 Nxe7 Kxe7 13 Re1 Kd8 14 Qh5 h6 15 Qxe5 Resigns.

No 2479



Hansen v Piket, Munich 1979. Black (to play) has only a queen for a bishop, but a masters panel decided that 1 . . . Qe2 forces 2 Qxe4 Qxe4 when Black should win a pawn up. It took a grandmaster, John Nunn, to spot the flaw in their analysis. How should the game end?

No 2478: 1 Na8. If Kxb3 2 Rh3+ Ka4 (Kc4 3 Nb6) 3 Ra3. If b4 2 Na1 Kxa1 3 Ra5.

Quick crossword no. 373

Across

1 Small, irregular amounts (5,3,5)
8 Aspersion (4)
9 Break (8)
10 Malign (10)
12 Red wine (6)
14 Pedagogue (6)
15 Business — advertisement on TV (10)
19 Enjoyment (8)
20 Border (4)
21 Rubella (6,7)

Down

2 Trustworthy (8)
3 A lighter — push (5)
4 Insult (7)
5 Duck — Sir Francis! (5)
6 Revolved (7)
7 Naked (4)
11 Ravel (8)
13 Recover (7)
14 Go before (7)
16 Grieve (5)
17 Salad plant (5)
18 Otherwise (4)

Last week's solution

■	T	A	K	E	A	S	H	I	N	E	T	O
H	■	M	■	D	■	E	■	N	■	N	■	R
Y	I	E	L	D	■	C	H	I	A	N	T	I
P	■	N	■	Y	■	R	■	T	■	U	■	S
O	D	D	S	■	D	E	C	I	S	I	O	N
C	■	E	■	A	■	T	■	A	■	■	■	T
H	I	D	I	N	G	■	S	T	A	R	V	E
O	■	■	■	T	■	A	■	E	■	E	■	E
N	O	N	S	E	N	S	E	■	S	P	A	R
D	■	O	■	N	■	T	■	I	■	L	■	I
R	E	T	I	N	U	E	■	R	E	I	G	N
I	■	C	■	A	■	R	■	I	■	C	■	G
A	S	H	W	E	D	N	E	S	D	A	Y	■

Bridge Zia Mahmood

HERE is a small test. First, suppose that, due to optimistic bidding, your trump suit in a grand slam contract was:

Dummy
♦ 6 4

Declarer
♦ A K J 9 3 2

You have plenty of entries to dummy for any finesse you may decide to take. How would you tackle the suit?

Now let us make the suit a little stronger:

Dummy
♦ 9 4

Declarer
♦ A K J 10 6 5

Would your approach be any different?

Sometimes, even the experts can become confused into treating similar combinations of cards as if they were identical — with fatal results. In the first position given above, the right play is to lay down the ace of diamonds. If the queen falls from West, cross to dummy for a finesse of the nine, otherwise cross for a finesse of the jack. You will make your grand slam when East has Qx or Qxx, or when West has the singleton queen.

The second position arose in a deal from this year's Vanderbilt tournament, one of the principal events on the American circuit (see next column for full deal). The bidding was a confused affair:

South	West	North	East
		2♣	Pass
2♥(1)	Pass	2NT	Pass
3♦(2)	Pass	3♥	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♦	Pass
4♥	Pass	4NT(3)	Pass
5♦(4)	Pass	6♦(5)	Pass
7♣(6)	Pass	7♦	All pass

(1) A conventional response showing 8 or more points, but less than an ace and a king. (2) A transfer, showing hearts. (3) Roman Key Card Blackwood in hearts. (4) One "ace" — in this case, the king of hearts. (5) To play, but . . . 6 Taking six diamonds as a grand-slam try.

Due to the conventional auction, South became declarer in seven diamonds. He won the opening spade lead in the dummy and cashed the ace of trumps. Now, because West

North
♠ A K 10
♥ A J
♦ A K J 10 6 5
♣ A 6

West
♠ Q 9 6 4
♥ 10 4
♦ Q 8 3 2
♣ 9 5 4

East
♠ J 8 7 2
♥ 9 8 5 2
♦ 7
♣ J 8 3 2

South
♠ 5 3
♥ K Q 7 6 3
♦ 9 4
♣ K Q 10 7

had four diamonds to the queen, South could no longer pick up the suit and had to go one down. Since the contract at the other table was six hearts, this converted a potential large gain into an even larger loss.

Had South paused a moment longer before playing to the second trick, I am sure he would have reflected that the play of the ace of diamonds would show a profit only if East had the singleton queen. Crossing to a club honour to run the nine of diamonds at once, however, would gain if East had a small singleton diamond — four times as likely as the singleton queen. Did you pass the test?

Letter from North Queensland Richard Cornish

Spirit of the dance

THE MEN and boys from Lockhart river have travelled a long way to be at Laura this year. Their dances went well but the impromptu photo call is a bit much for Smithy Bally. He's only two years old and this is his first dance festival. The flashes go off and he bursts into tears. His father Norman lifts him up and wipes the tears from his eyes. "He's a good dancer," says Norman proudly, "he's just a little bit shy."

Father and son, part of the Lockhart River Aboriginal dance group, are wearing matching traditional dress. Both are clad in grass skirts and have strings of oyster shells around their necks. Norman is covered in ochre war paint. For some of the people from Mornington Island, a community of more than 1,000 living 600km away in the Gulf of Carpentaria, this is their first festival. Stella Medwin is concerned about the children. "I don't think the kids slept at all last night," she says softly. She needn't have worried. The crowd love the dingo dance. Four old women and five girls move to the background as six proud young boys take centre stage and howl their song.

The boys are wearing conical headgear made by Stella's brother. Each hat, made from hand-spun human hair lined with maleleuca bark, takes about 10 days to make.

The dance ground has been in use since long before European colonisation. A patch of flat earth is encircled by a stand of old eucalyptus trees. A low sweeping ridge overlooks the small cricket pitch-sized oval on the flood plains of the Laura river. Beyond the canopy of the trees are the peaks and ridges of a sandstone escarpment.

A problem has arisen. The next dance troupe is not ready. Instead of throwing the programme into chaos the emcee takes advantage of the situation and asks if anyone has a didgeridoo on hand. She pleads with the crowd until a young shy white man makes his way to the microphone. Benjamin is from Melbourne, 3,500km to the south. The crowd is unusually quiet as he takes a breath. The first deep resonant sounds roll out of his didg. The crowd are pleased and Benjamin is humbled, "It's been a *real* privilege to play for you here today," he says quietly.

The Coen people enter through a cordoned gap in the crowd. Twenty eight men, women and children covered in ochre make a remarkable sight in the dappled shade. An old man dances with a young girl, they part, leave the circle of bodies, the young men dance with the women.

After they finish, songman Victor Lawrence is beaming smiles. International photographers form a wall of cameras normally saved for celebrity.

Surrounded by a crowd of mixed faces, Peter Costello hits a cardboard target tied to a hay bale with his first spear. The crowd clap with the politeness normally reserved for golf tournaments. Later, I meet his son David. "My father was forcibly removed by the authorities when he was small," he says with carefully measured words. "He was chained to his older brother and his mother. He was taken to a mission and provided with limited food. He had to learn to fend for himself, get his own food. That's where he learned to use the spear."

The next day the governor of Queensland arrives. After lunch she and her husband sit on a low stage surrounded by 5,000 people. Most are indigenous Australians from the Cape York and Gulf Country, many are young couples in T-shirts and earrings, and some are wealthy tourists from Europe. The governor steps up to the microphone and with a few simple words hands a large area to the west of the festival ground back to its traditional owners, the Kuku Yalanji. One by one their descendants take to the microphone. Aunty Rose Colless has been waiting for this day. Her hair is grey and her voice is wavering. "My mother used to say to me you'll be helping your people one day," she says, swallowing back tears. "She used to say don't let bitterness consume you. We still practise our culture today even though people don't believe us." She looks up from her notes and addresses the crowd, "I feel my mother's spirit here today!"

This article is one of a regular series of "letters" from readers living all over the world. Writers are invited to submit articles of no longer than 800 words (see address on page 2). Please enclose a self-addressed envelope if you wish your manuscript to be returned

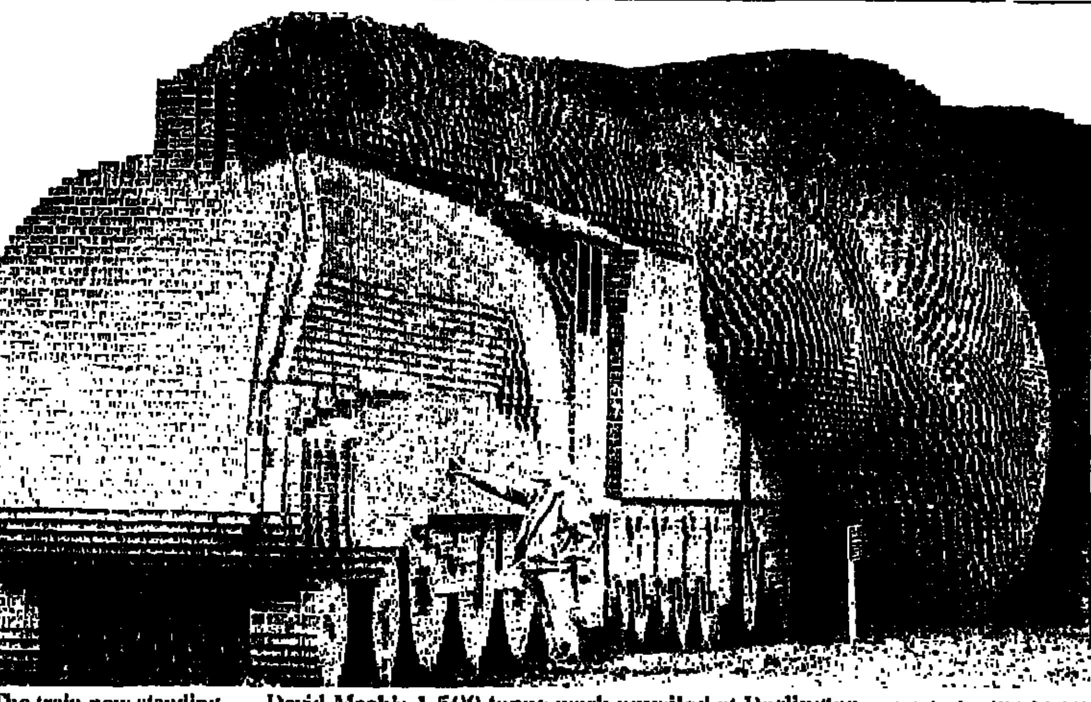
A Country Diary

Richard Mabey

EXTREMADURA, SPAIN: The massive quartzite cliff that towers above the Rio Tajo in the Monfrague Park was shrouded in drizzle and mist, as most of central Spain had been all week. It is known as Penfalcon, echoing Spain's ancient links with the Celts, and pointing up, if any emphasis were needed, the cloud-wreathed crag's aura of a hermitage or eyrie. Griffon vultures — no bird looks more terminally depressed in the rain — hunched on the rocks as immobile as gargoyles. Three black stork chicks peered disconsolately out of a small cave on the cliff face. Their hungry wails echoed across the river.

Then a breeze slowly began to stir the cloud, and a watery sun shone through. Gradually, as if they were literally being wafted up on warm air, Penfalcon's birds began to stir. The griffons spread their sodden wings out to dry in much the same way as cormorants do, then launched themselves into the air. For the first time in my life I saw a vulture deign to flap a wing. Soon there were more than 150 wheeling above the cliff. A few black and Egyptian vultures soared among them. A pair of peregrines streaked across the high crags. Ravens, choughs and black kites patrolled the lower air.

Then a crescendo of calls from the black stork chicks alerted us to the return of the parents — immense stick insects in scarlet and black. From the rocks behind us came a haunting metallic skirling. It was a blue rock thrush, in its free-fall display flight. No bird or song could have beeen more suited to this stony and sonorous valley.



The train now standing . . . David Mach's 1,500-tonne work unveiled at Darlington PHOTO: RICHARD RAYNER

'Gorgeous, sexy' train to nowhere

Martin Wainwright

"*IT WAS* certainly different," said foreman Norman Lord last week, as a ceremonial tarpaulin was hoist from his latest job by two cranes, a gaggle of artists and a member of the House of Lords.

"Aye, it's not often you have to measure-in every brick, down to a millimetre," said assistant brickie Paul Bowman, "especially when you've got 181,754 of the things and they're shaped like, well, this."

This, racing from a grass-topped tunnel at Darlington in a brick-built cloud of steam, was Train, the biggest piece of sculpture in Britain and the old railway town's tribute to the millennium.

Weighing 1,500 tonnes and built since January at the rate of one brick every four-and-a-half minutes, the sculpture is the latest inventive landmark by the Scottish artist David Mach.

"It's just a gorgeous, sexy thing and people are going to love it," said Mr Mach, aged 41, whose previous work includes a Greek temple made of car tyres and two glass fibre wrestlers holding up a 20ft freight container. "In years to come, let's hope people will come and see Train in the same way they go to Trafalgar Square or the Pyramids."

A straggly hawthorn hedge and a site between a supermarket warehouse and the Darlington bypass make the visit, initially, less dramatic than London or Egypt. But Train was positioned authentically on the disused line of the world's first railway, George Stephenson's Stockton and Darlington, and the 40-metre long sculpture is modelled on the celebrated engine Mallard.

Largely paid for by Arts Lottery funding, the sculpture required computer graphics to cope with the curving steam billows, as well as 94 plans (one for each course of bricks) and 176 vertically aligned cross-sectional drawings.

"It's one of those works which raise the spirit and lift expectations," said Lord Palumbo, the former Arts Council chairman who helped commission the £760,000 project and opened it with a green guard's flag and three whistle blasts. "If there is still anyone who cavils at public art, they should come here."

Inevitably, some were already there, including a disgruntled group of locals. Tim Fawcett, aged 41, a decorator on invalidity benefit, said: "I'm not the only one round here who could think of better things to spend the money on."

Notes & Queries Joseph Harker

WHAT is the difference between erotica and pornography?

THE height of the book shelf. — *Terry Victor, Caerwent, Monmouthshire*

I WOULD suggest that "erotica" is used by bookstores to disguise the fact that they are selling what most people perceive to be "pornography". The distinction lies in the psyche of the purchaser (or retailer): if you feel guilty about what you buy (or sell), then you call it "erotica".

A colleague once claimed a book full of pictures of naked bodies is art, so long as it is only available in hardcover. — *Vincent Finney, Edinburgh*

IT'S ONE of these irregular nouns: "they" read pornography, "you" read erotica, "I" read stimulating adult narratives. — *Jane Carnall, Edinburgh*

HOW were telephone dialling codes allocated to countries?

FROM the outset, these codes have been allocated by the International Telecommunications Union and its predecessors. The first list appeared in 1960, when a "Red Book" of recommendations listed a set of codes for European countries. Most of these original codes are the same today, although political changes have altered a few.

Sadly the official list of codes is not immune from political interference: code 886 is marked "Reserved". In fact it is for Taiwan but, because of China's domination, 21 million people remain officially anonymous. — *Andrew Emmerson, Telecommunications Heritage Group, Northampton*

JERUSALEM means "city of peace" and Benidorm means "sleep well". Are there other similarly ironic place names?

THOUGH there are mountains just outside Los Angeles, the cities of El Monte, Monterey Park and Montebello are all securely in the flatlands, while neighbours Claremont and Montclair are doubly ironic in that they are both in the flatlands and subject to the worst smog in the area. — *Tom Schneidermann, Washington DC, USA*

IF IN fact Benidorm has the aramaic root "beni" (May 25), it does not mean "songs" but "sons", both in Arabic and in Hebrew. — *Karen Driscoll, Amman, Jordan*

HONG KONG (Cantonese) or Xiang Gang (Mandarin) means Fragrant Harbour, yet never has a finger trailed such putrid waters. Taiwan's former name, Formosa, from the Portuguese "beautiful", also strikes a chord of environmental dissonance. — *William Meldrum, Auckland, New Zealand*

Any answers?

WHAT would be the constitutional consequences if the heir to the throne declared he/she was an atheist? — *R E Bracewell, Harlow, Essex*

WHY does the wedding ring go on the third finger of the left hand? I am left-handed: is it socially acceptable to have the wedding band on my right hand? — *Adewale Ogun, London*

WHY do some aircraft leave jet trails and others do not? — *Gordon Joly, London*

Answers should be e-mailed to weekly@guardian.co.uk, faxed to 0171/+44171-242-0985, or posted to The Guardian Weekly, 75 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3HQ. The website is at http://nq.guardian.co.uk



Fine slices of the spectrum

ART
Adrian Searle

THE absence of painting in the 1997 Turner Prize smorgasbord comes as no surprise. Nor does the [illegible] reaction to it. You might wonder why it is that people feel that painting needs to be defended. Could there be a lingering suspicion that things other than painting and traditional sculpture still aren't art, and that the public finds more recent ways of working at best impenetrable, at worst cheating? It is largely a manufactured debate, but one that will run and run, at least until December, when the winner of the Turner Prize is announced.

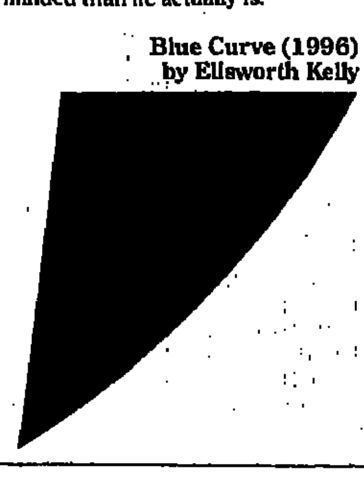
None of this will affect the sales of Messrs Winsor & Newton's products one jot. Painters will go on painting, installers installing, conceptual artists — er — conceiving. That debates about art and the avant-garde end up as lengthy columns in the Daily Express does, however, prove that people find art important, even if only as an adjunct to the entertainment business.

Looking at paintings isn't like watching videos in the dark, or queueing to see an actress sleeping in a vitrine. It is a different, slower kind of confrontation. Paintings involve just as many concepts as other kinds of art, and when they're being displayed, they are also being hung in relation to walls, floors, doors and other architectural features. A painting show is an installation.

Which brings us to Ellsworth Kelly's retrospective, at London's Tate Gallery until September. Kelly, a 74-year-old American painter, spent his early career in post-war France, immersing himself in European, high Modernist manners. He studied Surrealism. He steeped himself in Constructivism, Le Corbusier and the Romanesque. He aped Picasso, and gave his portraits the same startled eyes as Byzantine saints. He looked at Artaud's frightening drawings. He admired Brancusi and was admired by Braque. He designed fabrics for Balmain. He drew and painted with a crisp finesse. Like Robert Motherwell, he became the most Frenchified of American post-war abstractionists.

The Tate's show, adapted from his recent Guggenheim Museum retrospective, misses most of this formative aspect of Kelly's art, and includes none of the artist's drawings or collages. Kelly himself selected and hung the Tate exhibition, along with Nicholas Serota, and the show appears to be an attempt to arrange 45 years of work in order to show the artist as more single-minded than he actually is.

Blue Curve (1996) by Ellsworth Kelly



Kelly is an impure purist, a painter of large-scale experiments and exhilarations. He has side-stepped groups and tendencies as much as he has been a fellow-traveller to them. Kelly is a colour painter, just as interested in black and white, and in line and tone and contour, as in colour's mood-altering resonances.

But it is the containment of colour that grabs you in Kelly's works, as they float in the white rooms at the Tate. Sober, truncated, black quadrants, sharp stabs of yellow, fat, flat greens, electric-shock reds and giant Dairylea individual cheese-wedge portions of imperturbable cobalt blue. Apart from anything else, Kelly's work is about pleasure and surprise, and the idea of colour being given dramatic shape.

The problem in Kelly's work — where there is one — becomes one of frontality: he never seems entirely certain where the experience of his paintings should begin and end. Seen from the side, his paintings become much less acute. We see the battening holding the joined canvases together, the mechanics of the support, the tedious technicalities that are a constant reminder of what a hybrid, vulnerable object a painting is.

Kelly's forays into sculpture have, since the late 1950s, highlighted the fact that his works are really coloured reliefs. His tall, suave bronzes are mostly fixed to the floor with sculpturally irrelevant backplates. They are meant to be seen from the front alone. The one tall, narrow bronze that lacks a visible support is more surprising for the fact that it seems to balance unaided than for its form.

Much is made of the fact that Kelly has dealt with the painter's constant tussle between figure and ground by making the entire work a figure, silhouetting it against the wall, which then becomes the ground. How much space each work should occupy, and how much it needs, tussles with inadvertent relations set up between works that occupy the same wall.

The startling finale to Kelly's show at the Tate deals with this by almost theatrical means. Individual, angled, slanting forms line opposite walls, acting as a kind of expressionist colonnade. At the far end of the room, a long horizontal bar of dark bronze occupies a wall of its own. Its bottom edge is a long curve. The bronze piece acts both as an optical bridge and as a joist, stopping the room from collapsing optically in on itself. The room, an exercise in wrestling with instability, grabs you by the lapels. It is a great installation.

But if painting is such a big deal, why is Kelly's show so quiet? The deserted airport-lounge feel of the ticketing area affirms my impression that for much of the public, modern painting still means figurative painting, with all its attendant lumps, smears and complex brushstrokes, exactly the kind of thing exemplified by Howard Hodgkin, even when we're not entirely sure what it is that his painting is addressing. Kelly, on the other hand, is dealing with the conceptual and perceptual complexities of painting reduced to line, colour and form. It is a complicated business.



Gift of a part . . . Judi Dench as famous actress Esme in Amy's View — PHOTOGRAPH: NEIL LIBBERT

On the side of the players

THEATRE
Michael Billington

LIKE all good dramatists, David Hare is a bundle of contradictions: he conducts in public his own private debate between radicalism and style, realism and romance. But in Amy's View at the National on London's South Bank, Hare has written an unashamed paean to the theatre in which his romantic side wins hands down over his sceptical one: it's wittily enjoyable, but without the schismatic division that made Skylight unforgettable.

Theatre certainly lies at the heart of Amy's View. It starts in Berkshire in 1979 with famed West End actress Esme Allen confronting her daughter Amy and the latter's ambitious film-buff boyfriend, Dominic. Over the next 16 years we see how Esme's theatrical star wanes while media-celebrity Dominic's symbolically rises. Caught between them is Amy, whose view that love conquers everything is cruelly exposed.

Hare sets the stage for a series of confrontations. Theatre versus the rival media. Mother versus daughter. Esme's feckless charm versus Dominic's Thatcherite greed. But, while the mother-daughter scenes have a passionate intensity, the larger cultural debate never really takes off, largely because Hare's sympathies are all too evident. He may give Esme token flaws — including a financial naivety that allows her to become a Lloyd's Name — but he clearly adores her resilience and courage as much as he loathes Dominic's ambition and aura of trendy TV opinion-forming.

There is plenty in Amy's View to enjoy. There is a telling, Osborne-like vision of England as a crumbling form of theatre: a fantasy theme-park. Hare is also very good on the minutiae of personal relationships: the frozen silence when Esme and Dominic are first left alone; Amy's later, obstinate refusal to accept her mother's embrace. But, though the play has many moments of emotional truth, it is dubious for drama to tell us how wonderful the theatre is.

But, even if Hare is writing from a position of romantic certainty, Richard Eyre's production wittily captures the play's self-referential quality: Bob Crowley's set is based on a series of receding proscenium arches as if the Berkshire home were itself a stage. Hare has also written a gift of a part for Judi Dench as Esme. Dench is excellent at giving unsentimental portraits of actresses here, even though the play is emotionally on her side, she makes Esme tough, caustic and durable, not least in the final bare-walled dressing room scene.

Samantha Bond matches her perfectly as Amy, endowing the character with a self-destructive attachment to the hustling Dominic, played valiantly by Eoin McCarthy. Ronald Pickup as Esme's permanently sozzled neighbour and Joyce Redman as her indestructible mother-in-law also offer flawless cameos. It's a high-grade production.

But, if one has lingering doubts it is because Hare seems more anxious to prove a point about the moral value of theatre than to use the stage as a dialectical forum: in short, what we get is not just Amy's but also David's View.

Loyalty, thy name is Colin

TELEVISION
Nancy Banks-Smith

"I have to be seen to be believed" — The Queen

"*THIS* is a photograph of our beloved Queen Mother with a sheep," said Colin Edwards, passing it to the Queen. The Queen Mother, her feathers blowing like a hen in a high wind, was standing beside a self-possessed sheep. The Queen's long Windsor mouth widened. "Very nice," she said. "And," added Colin, "you may or may not have seen this in The Times, madam, the following day." It was a picture of him kissing the Queen Mother's hand. "Ay did!" said the Queen with some emphasis. Colin was the subject of Royal Watchers (BBC2). No royal visit, however humdrum, is complete without Colin in his Union Jack cap and his carrying cry, "Hello, your Majesty! We're here again!"

You don't speak to a royal until a royal speaks to you, but Colin is confident of his welcome. "We're like old friends. I'm quite sure the Queen is deeply grateful to people like myself for travelling great distances at quite enormous expense. But, to me, that's irrelevant. I think she looks for us on these visits. She'd miss us. I think, when she went home she'd say, 'Oh! Where was Laura today? Where was Betty? Where was Colin?'"

Colin was at Sandringham. "Your Majesty! A very happy birthday! I'm sure you're delighted to be spending it at dear, old Sandringham for the first time for five years." "Oh, yes," said the Queen Mother. If her socks were on fire, she'd be lucky to say more. Colin's conversation is a seamless robe. "I've met you now, as you know, for the fourth time since Wednesday," said Colin. "I know," she said with feeling. He gave her a book about roses to go with the book about roses he gave her 12 years before. "Well, that's *wonderful!* Thank you *very* much!" she said, her head tilted.

The Duke of Edinburgh is most likely to talk to a nun with a periscope, the Queen to a scout in a wheelchair and Princess Diana to anything less than two feet tall. But the Colin factor throws everything out of kilter.

Colin is the two-foot nun in the wheelchair. They all talk to him. He was questioning the Queen closely about her mother's hip. "I believe she danced at the ghillies ball, was that correct?" She said "No, no." So now you have it from the horse's mouth. She was wearing a rather peculiar purple hat, warm make-up and rouge. Her gaze was formidable. When she moved on, all the frills, jabots and chains of office flowed after her. Colin has been a temporary log-jam.

I have rarely seen her so natural, clear and unself-conscious. Now the royals realised they were being filmed by a high-definition digital BBC camcorder that looks like a family model and doesn't need a crew.

This put them at their ease or off their guard, depending on your point of view. Paul Henley and Alex Rowbottom, who made Royal Watchers, are not professional film-makers. They are anthropologists. They study man.

It was quite dark when the man got home to his terraced house in Macclesfield and his 5,000 royal photographs. He had given a poem to Princess Diana. She had called him Colin. "Colin," she said, "you know everything." He didn't know this film was about him. He didn't know that.

Paperbacks

Nicholas Lezard

Simon Wiesenthal: A Life in Search of Justice, by Hella Pick (Phoenix, £7.99)

DEEPLY satisfying as it is to have the world's idols overturned, the spectacle of the World Jewish Congress calling Simon Wiesenthal a charlatan can't have made anyone feel good — apart, perhaps, from various revisionist pond-life.

That Wiesenthal's status as the foremost seeker of justice against perpetrators of the Holocaust is in doubt may be shocking for those who haven't been paying attention But Pick goes into all the evidence, and if her tone throughout is one of embattled astonishment that anyone could so seriously doubt his methods and credentials, you can see that she has plenty of reasons for adopting it.

Pick's book is, though, a crucially important testament to his achievements, ending with a speech he gave in 1995 from the same Viennese balcony from which Hitler waved down to the cheering multitudes.

Domestic Manners of the Americans, by Fanny Trollope, ed and int Pamela Neville-Sington (Penguin Classics, £8.99)

THIS caused a huge stir when first published in 1832 — several of the phrases she picked up have since entered the language over here (eg, "go the whole hog"); and, more importantly, she influenced every British commentator on the Americans ever since — that is, trying to be nice, but eventually throwing up her hands in exasperation. Much fun to be had upon reading sentences like: "One great boast of the country is that they have no national debt, or that they shall have none in two years."

Ecstasy Reconsidered, by Nicholas Saunders (Nicholas Saunders, £9.95)

FOLLOW-UP to his fascinating and definitive E For Ecstasy. More of the same, with the latest on the kind of rubbish they're selling at raves these days, legal rights, and whether the drug will drive you mad or not (we don't know yet, but one thing we do know is that it would appear to make Nicholas Saunders a lousy proof-reader). The book to get if you're a concerned user, parent, or just Jack Straw. (Mail-order from nicholas@ecstasy.org or 14 Neal's Yard, London WC2H 9DP.)

Infinity and the Mind: The Science and Philosophy of the Infinite, by Rudy Rucker (Penguin, £8.99)

IF YOU liked Douglas Hofstadter's Gödel, Escher, Bach, you'll love this, Hard stuff about infinity: not the drivelly wafflings of the New Age but proper mathematics and logical philosophy. It is written, claims the author, "with the average person in mind", which means Rucker has a significantly higher opinion of his fellow-humans than I. Great end-of-chapter questions, such as the invitation to prove that there are no uninteresting numbers.

If you would like to order any of these paperbacks with a discount of £1 contact CultureShop (see opposite)

All things bright and dutiful

Seamus Deane

A History of Young People in the West
edited by Giovanni Levi and Jean Claude Schmitt

Volume One: Ancient and Medieval Rites of Passage
translated by Camille Naish

Volume Two: Stormy Evolution to Modern Times
translated by Carol Volk
Harvard 402pp (vol 1) 412pp (vol 2)
£23.50 each

YOUTH may be wasted on the young, but much of it has also been wasted by the old. War and education are the most venerable means: but there are others — benumbing work, enforced early marriage (especially for girls), statutory regulations, religious denunciations. But all these means of dealing with youth have a more positive and enduring aim — the integration of young people into a social system, the values of which they will come to share, serve and defend. One of the most fascinating features of the 17 essays, and introduction, that make up these two volumes is the predominance of that anxiety, from ancient Greece to fifties American culture, to bring the young within the ideological embrace of the *polis*, or state.

The ancient world here is, as usual, Greece and Rome; the medieval and modern worlds are represented for the most part by France, Italy and Germany, with occasional forays into the Anglo-Saxon societies. The complex Athenian notion of *paideia*, education of the body and mind through athletics, hunting, writing, reading and music, owed a debt to the pedagogic systems of Sparta and Crete. But it went beyond them in the subtlety of its vision of civility and of the means by which this could be possessed and shared by Athenian youth.

Alain Schnapp's essay demonstrates how the early (Archaic) black-figure painters of Greek vessels emphasise the physical, including the homosexual, relations between Greek youths and their mentors, while the later (Classical) red-figure painters stress the intellectual activities. This indicates, perhaps, a gradual interiorisation of the idea of education. The myth of the centaur Chiron, who is often depicted taking an infant into his charge, is an emblem of that harmonic relationship between the animal and human qualities that Greek *paideia* sought to achieve.



Fascism refounded the state on the ideal of youth — PHOTOGRAPH: AKG

In Rome, on the other hand, there was a much more pronounced emphasis on military training, on virility, on the rule of the father. Augusto Fraschetti reminds us how variable the idea of youth was for them, with adolescence stretching from 15 to 30 and youth from 30 to 45 or even 50. For women, it was not so much age as social status that counted, although the two were not unrelated. Virgins, wives, matrons and old women were the female categories; but, as with the men, the position of the individual in public life was all-important. A boy became a youth when he put on his toga, and ceased to be one when he became eligible for the magistracy.

This again reminds us that service to the Roman state took pre-eminence over all else. We have here a number of the usual Roman stories of fathers who had their beloved but legally errant sons executed to demonstrate the supremacy of the city's law over all other considerations. Christianity modified many of the central features of classical conceptions of youth, education and civility. Its medieval and most enduring version of *paideia* was chivalry — a system, stretching from the 11th to the 15th centuries, centred in France, structured around the social ideal of the aristocracy and the knight. It was refined into a spiritual ideal, which survives in the concept of the gentleman, that recruited young people, men and women, into a system of loyal service to king, lord and lover that was, perhaps, more aesthetically entrancing than any ideology devised before or since.

CHRISTIANE Marchello-Nizia's essay, "Courtly Chivalry", reminds us of the attraction that the names Charlemagne and Arthur, Lancelot and Guinevere, Tristan and Iseult, Roland, Gawain and others retain. She also points out that this is a system propagated almost exclusively by literature, most especially by the Chanson de Roland.

The defence of Christianity is a standard theme; but just as important is the emphasis on the rite of passage from youth to knighthood, when the youth is "dubbed" a man, both soldier and a Christian, a notion retained in the Catholic sacrament of Confirmation. This reminds us of the chivalric code's capacity to blend the political, military, sexual and sacramental worlds together. The grey face of the Roman state and of the future modern state is effaced in the romance of these centuries. The demand of loyalty is nevertheless imperative, the price of betrayal just as high; but the ideal to which commitment is given is not only more effulgent, but more youthful. This is social integration that preserves, rather than destroys, youth.

The Reformation frowned on all those initiation rites — the charivari, for instance — or all those excesses such as noisiness, drunkenness, and, above all sexual misbehaviour, that characterised youth. So, too, did the Counter-Reformation. Reformed Schools and the great and powerful Jesuit schools of France took children out of the home and, through the institution of the boarding school, began the appropriation of youth for Church and state that has continued in a variety of ways ever since. The Enlightenment secularised education but put its faith almost entirely in a uniform system that would lead to a universally acceptable ideal of rationality. The arbiter of such rationality increasingly became the state.

Even though the French Revolution accelerated everything in the political and social world (even to the point of accelerating the successive waves of youth by inventing the idea of the "generation"), the increasingly defined notion of the categories of childhood, youth, maturity, indicated that the life span itself had become more bureaucratically regulated and controlled. After all, the right to vote was for a long time attached to ownership of property, religious persuasion, age and gender. To become a fully fledged citizen, one had to conform to a series of requirements, the greatest of which was that youth be in service to the state, and not an unruly cohort that threatened its stability.

Part of the genius of fascism, especially in its Italian and German forms, was to refound the idea of the state on the idea of Youth — vibrant, given to the future, free of the shackles of an anaemic tradition. In a different sense, in the US, the birth of the teenager, the juvenile delinquent and, eventually, of youth culture was in itself part of a statist anxiety that the new generation had not been sufficiently absorbed into the traditional values of the senior culture.

These essays are of uneven quality but at their best, they give a detailed account of what is not so much a history of young people as a history of the control exercised to curb their anarchic tendencies and make them learn to love the controls that brought their youth to an end.

Books service gets new name

EXACTLY two years ago we launched Books @ The Guardian Weekly to help readers order books directly from Britain by fax or by e-mail. The demand for the service, which is used by readers in more than 90 countries around the world, has grown and grown. The special discount prices at the end of selected book reviews have proved particularly popular.

But some readers have mistaken Books @ The Guardian Weekly for an e-mail address. To avoid confusion, we are renaming the service CultureShop. However, the e-mail address — bid@mail.bogo.co.uk — and fax number (+44 181 324 5678) will remain the same. And your orders will continue to be processed by the same team that provides the first-class service you currently receive.

Through CultureShop you may order any book reviewed or mentioned in our pages. But CultureShop can also send you any of up to 100,000 titles in print, as long as you can supply the book title, author and publisher.

CultureShop is also happy to provide a gift service. All you have to do is give the name and full address of the person to whom the books should be sent.

With cost of delivery coming down thanks to the new two-tier air mail service — 30 per cent of order value for a 14-21 day service, 40 per cent if you want to receive your book(s) within two weeks — CultureShop offers unbeatable value to Weekly readers around the world.

Married to the Mob

Philip Horne

Laws of Nature: Mafia Women
by Clare Longrigg
Chatto & Windus 266pp £16.99

"A *WOMAN* who belongs to a family of mafiosi has not yet achieved such emancipation and autonomy that she can escape the subordinate and passive role she has always held relative to her 'man'..." Loaded judgments like this, from a Palermo court acquitting the wives of two mafia bosses, were what spurred Clare Longrigg to her labour of love and hate on the mafia.

"I was motivated chiefly by irritation," she says of her initial impulse. "In the name of equality, I wanted women to be given a fair trial: in the dock with the men . . . I found it hard to accept that women are not clever enough to commit crimes. I also found it difficult to believe that women are morally superior to men."

In fact she found that "women turned out to be even more entrenched in mafia values than men". Not for Longrigg the less morally strenuous varieties of feminism, the special pleadings — implicitly drawing on the premise of women's essential purity — that mirror the patronising chivalry of Sicilian male judges (attitudes the mafia itself publicly promotes with its posturings about family values). She knows too much about the daughter who stabs her father in the chest before he can testify against his mafia associates; or about the mother who creeps to the grave of her state-witness daughter, only to smash the photograph with a hammer.

Mafia Women, advancing with grim purpose through a cunningly organised succession of short narratives, is wise in a dry way to the ironic implications of feminist arguments in the criminal field. It answers the slur that women are incapable of doing bad things by showing that they repeatedly do very bad things indeed. This demonstration, though, is far from being notched up as a triumphant flexing of hard muscle by the sex formerly known as weaker; it is needed for the civic good, so that mafia women can be acknowledged as involved enough to testify against the mafia.

Equality, here on the limits of moral/cultural relativism, is recognised as a dubious aspiration: Longrigg seems quietly appalled, for instance, by the ghastly Brenda Colletti of South Philadelphia, emulous wife of a small-time hit-man, bragging nostalgically about achieving a *tête-à-tête* with "the Old Man . . . that was it for me. 'Cause I've never known a woman that was able to have a private meeting with the boss." Longrigg's capitals on "Old Man" in her transcription of this interview mark Brenda's as a case still tangled in a pretty patriarchal loop.

But back in the old country, there's a strong matriarchal side as well to the Cosa Nostra (Sicily), the 'Ndrangheta (Calabria) and the Camorra (Naples). The book shows wives, sisters, mothers and mistresses of dead and imprisoned bosses taking over extortion rackets, heroin operations and so on, planning murders or counting out money at the kitchen table, secreting drugs in packets of washing powder.

Women are wholeheartedly implicated in the mafia culture of violent retribution, the codes of "honour" and "respect" about which Longrigg is witheringly sceptical — as she is about her subjects' shameless exploitation of gender stereotypes ("I'm a woman, aren't I? Haven't I the right to love a man, isn't that the law of nature?"). Her cool analysis sees self-interest under the operatic postures of passion, duty and sentiment, and reads the vendetta more as a power-play than an unmediated ideal.

The mamma is central to this violent culture, as in Coriolanus ("I made you and I can destroy you", declares "Grandma Heroin" to her son in court). The parodic inversion of "normal" morality in the mafia family often produces the blackest situation comedy: "When my mother found out we were dealing heroin she was furious. She didn't want anything going on behind her back that she didn't have control over." Women and children must be "saved" first, Longrigg's horrifying tour de force convinces, if the foundations of the mafia are to be undermined.

Where will science take us?

Tim Radford

The Fabric of Reality
by David Deutsch
Allen Lane 390pp £25

The Life of the Cosmos
by Lee Smolin
Weidenfeld 358pp £20

The End of Science
by John Horgan
Little, Brown 324pp £18.99

Imagined Worlds
by Freeman Dyson
Harvard 216pp £14.50

IT MAY be possible to alter the life-cycle of the Sun: to stop it becoming a red giant and incinerating us. If the ambition can be imagined, then perhaps it can be achieved — and we still have a billion or so years to work out how. David Deutsch makes this part of his proof that life is a fundamental principle: important not just to us, or the planet, but to the solar system and indeed the universe.

Deutsch is in the quantum-gravity business at Cambridge. The quantum world is the bottom line of all reality, but it sounds pretty creepy to laymen, because in it, what is co-exists with what might be. In it, things happen that shouldn't.

Light shone through a grating displays interference patterns. We think of light as waves, but ultimately, it is counted in quanta. One quantum (or particle, or atom) of light is a photon. If you whizz a photon through a slit, it shows an interference pattern too. Interference with what? Your ordinary, run-of-the-mill quantum mechanic would say: "Yep, that's a quantum effect all right. Weird, isn't it?" Deutsch says no. Something must be interfering with the photon. This interference must be from shadow photons, from all the universes that run in parallel with this one.

Now, there is an interval called Planck time, anything shorter than which it makes no sense to think of. So Hawking and his inheritors don't talk of the universe having a "beginning" as such, because suddenly it is just there and the clock is already showing a fraction of a second.

This time, however short, is long compared to no time at all. Inside this time, it is perfectly possible for a "virtual particle" to borrow energy from nowhere and pop into existence, and out again, paying the energy back as it departs. If a particle that exists only as a possibility can suddenly become real for a time, however brief, why not a universe? And what's the difference between Planck time and 15 billion years, compared to no time at all?

Lee Smolin, who does quantum gravity at Pennsylvania State university, isn't sure about the idea of no time at all, either. When a star a bit bigger than the Sun collapses into a black hole, crushing itself into an infinitely small, infinitely dense point, the space and time inside that hole collapse with it. What does that mean? Where does the time go? Smolin thinks it pops out into another universe. So maybe our universe is a daughter born of a black hole from some parent universe.

Perhaps the essential properties of forces and matter mutate with each universe, so that the ones with the wrong ratios snuff out early and the ones calibrated more cutely produce stars with life-cycles that end in black holes. (To do this, they also have to produce lots of carbon, which permits life, and humans.) Neat idea, but wacky: can you prove it? You could disprove it, says Smolin. If the idea does not get disproved, maybe it is proved by default?

'A Juggler Of Universes' from Fantastic Illustrations Of Grandville (Dover, £10.95)

Both these dazzling books owe something to Richard Dawkins, the Oxford biologist, who is also one of the exemplary scientists in a new book by John Horgan, a Scientific American scribe who thinks that they are all pulling our legs, being "ironic" in the literary-critical sense. Ironic science is fine, Horgan says, but it cannot achieve the goal of transcending the science we already have, and that is because science has gone about as far as it can go.

Horgan certainly puts the argument skilfully enough to provoke reaction. You could learn a lot about where science is going. You could also learn a lot about where a skilful but cheesed-off interviewer can take the stuff in his notebook.

One of these encounters was with Freeman Dyson, a British-born, Princeton physicist, who 30 years ago was proposing that when we run out of resources we could reprogram trees to sprout on comets and grow to enormous heights, so that our descendants could dwell in their branches. Oh, and when the Sun starts to die (this is where we came in) we could move further out and crunch up all the other planets and asteroids into a huge enclosing shell which would reflect the weakening sunlight back on ourselves.

This stuff really does sound like "ironic" science: ideas as toys to be played with. Yet Imagined Worlds is a marvellous little book. No, science can't solve every problem, but it is still our best bet. Dyson does not think science as we understand it will last for ever — what people will be doing and thinking a thousand years hence would seem like magic to us now. What Dyson argues is that we need to keep in touch with our reality. The Earth is not just a cultural museum: the life on it will offer our descendants an object lesson in the art of living. "It will give them a reality check which they will need more and more, the further they move away from it."

He swiftly goes on to point out that if the universe is balanced in a just-so manner, then even though the resources of each galaxy would be finite, the laws of physics and information theory would allow life to survive for ever. That is because we could co-operate with neighbours in other galaxies to maintain the optimal conditions for life. Ironic? And what was that about a reality check?

Travel in brief

Steven Poole

Travels as a Brussels Scout, by Nick Middleton (Weidenfeld, £17.99)

INSPIRED by working on a report for the Danish government about the efficiency of washing machines (yes, really), our geographer hos embarks on a modern Grand Tour of Europe to see what we'd be getting ourselves into should economic union ever come to pass. "Have we really become one pizza-eating, Peugeot-driving whole? Or do we remain 15 separate cultures, each with its own cute little identity?"

Dreams on Hitler's Couch, by Vitali Vitaliev (Richard Cohen, £12.99)

VITALIEV, an award-winning Soviet investigative journalist, moved to the West in 1990. This charming memoir of culture-shock details his loves and fears in a new found freedom: getting ripped off in Soho, buying his first Western suit (glittery), taking Miss World to the races, hob-nobbing with the liberal British media (one member of which, Vitaliev is disgusted to note, has a portrait of Stalin). The titular sofa is a 170-year-old Biedermeier once owned by Hitler, that he stumbles across at a Tasmanian guest house. Very funny.

Gauguin's Skirt, by Stephen F Eisenman (Thames & Hudson, £19.95)

"*WHEN* Gauguin landed in Tahiti, he entered a world in which, unlike nineteenth-century Europe, sexual dimorphism has never been the reigning paradigm." If you can swallow that sort of prose (which boils down to the uncontroversial "gender is fluid, innit?"), you might have fun with Eisenman's unusually sumptuous anthropological-cum-art-historical investigation into modern Tahitian culture and Gauguin's famous Polynesian paintings.

Flight of Passage: Growing up in the Air, by Rinker Buck (Viking, £17.99)

BUCK flew across America, aged 15, with his 17-year-old brother Kernahan in 1966. They were the sole occupants of an old Piper Cub propeller-driven biplane — no battery, no lights, and only a $9.95 compass to fly by. A tale of youthful derring-do and brotherly love, and lament for America's pre-Vietnam innocence.

Tarantulas, Marmosets and Other Stories: An Amazon Diary, by Nick Gordon (Metro, £17.99)

GORDON quite literally lives in a hut in the Amazonian rain forest. Snorting dodgy ground-up seeds with the local shaman; building an artificial tarantula habitat in order to film the furry monsters making spidery love or killing and eating a two-foot snake — all in a day's work for Gordon, a wildlife cameraman for the BBC.

Inspired preacher of change

Joan Bakewell

Anything We Love Can Be Saved: A Writer's Activism
by Alice Walker
Women's Press 304pp £16.99

WHEN, in April 1996, Alice Walker attended a human rights awareness workshop in northern Ghana, she had been billed to speak on "Cultural and Modern Development in FGM (Female Genital Mutilation aka female circumcision)". "Maybe it was the title," she told the group, "but I would never go near a subject as general as that." Exactly so. Alice Walker's writer's activism — the subtitle of the book — is not the stuff of conference papers or protest marches. Her skills as writer and as activist were forged side-by-side in the American South during the civil rights campaigns of the sixties. Today, the writer prevails and the activist uses the vocabulary of creative prose, the cadences of poetry and the logic of the imagination.

Having travelled to northern Ghana at the behest of Amnesty International, she set aside whatever agenda they had for her and simply told stories. It is what she does supremely well. "I talk about how, as a child, I became aware of violence against women . . . as a 13-year-old girl, I saw the body of a woman whose husband had shot off half her face. I speak of my determination to remember her, to grow up and go to school and learn how to tell her story."

She has told many stories since that time and brought succour and inspiration to those for whom she speaks, the oppressed black women of the world. And by illuminating for everyone the lives and aspirations of such women, she has helped bring about the very changes she as an activist is seeking. It was done not because she set out a political strategy, but because she is an inspired preacher whose rhetoric of hope defies the harshness of reality.

This book's title, Anything We Love Can Be Saved, is surely the text of a sermon rather than any hard-headed political reality. "The world is easier to change than we think," she writes, "because change begins with each of us saying to ourselves and meaning it, 'I will not harm anyone or anything in this moment'." All religions would say as much.



Alice Walker asks questions her ancestors couldn't PHOTO: ALAN ROWELL

But as well as inspiring her audience in Ghana, Alice Walker did other things. For example, of these 38 pieces, five were originally given as speeches, and four are letters, including one to President Bill Clinton refusing an invitation to the White House in protest at the Helms-Burton Bill penalising those who trade with Cuba.

Along with these published concerns goes the agony of commitment — the sleepless nights spent for Salman Rushdie, the response to civilian bombing in the Gulf war: "The grief I feel about this will accompany me to my grave." Her heightened sensibilities glow on every page. So does the triumphant ego. As an example for oppressed women she is surely a dazzling role model.

Her delight in life, her exuberant love of anecdote and friendship shine through. Things personal come off best. There is a joyful description of transforming the colours of her home. There is a celebration of dreadlocks so funny and right it should be pinned henceforth to the noticeboard of Brixton police station.

There is also, to be mined from various essays, a powerful feminist theology and rhetoric. From a background of hymn-singing Methodism, Alice Walker asks the questions her women ancestors were not allowed to voice in church.

"Would they have said Adam was a weak man who evaded personal responsibility for his action? Would they have pointed out how quickly and obsequiously he turned in his wife to God?"

She is generous to the targets of other censure. In Louis Farrakhan, she "finds a man of humour, a persuasive teacher and someone unafraid to speak truth to power". When balancing the achievements and faults of such as Winnie Mandela, she seeks to have "the humility to place gently at their feet the stones we've come to throw".

Alice Walker does not throw stones. She is, like many others, active in good causes and peaceful protest. She is uniquely herself, as a writer of moving and transforming stories.

If you would like to order this book at the special price of £14.99 contact CultureShop (see page 27)

Mirage in the sands

Dea Birkett

Desert Queen: The Extraordinary Life of Gertrude Bell
by Janet Wallach
Phoenix 448pp £11.99

THE "flat-chested, man-woman, globe-trotting, rump-wagging, blethering ass", Miss Gertrude Bell, has been central in forming our image of the East. Britain's most distinguished Arabic scholar for the first two decades of this century, she was central in the negotiations which created the current controversial boundaries of the Gulf states. But if her fellow adviser to the Foreign Office on Arab affairs, Sir Mark Sykes, was less than complimentary about his colleague's attributes, Bell's latest biographer is more flattering. The "courageous traveller", "uncrowned queen of Iraq", and "brains behind Lawrence of Arabia" has "made her mark on history".

Gertrude Bell, whose life overflowed with "firsts" and "onlys", was indeed extraordinary. Born to a wealthy Cumbrian industrial family in 1868, she became the first woman to get first-class marks in Modern History at Oxford. She was the first woman appointed Political Officer in Basra, the only female Oriental Secretary in Baghdad, and the sole woman delegate at the Cairo Conference of 1921, a milestone in the fate of the Middle East. She was responsible for advising on the dismantling of the British mandate and drawing up the boundaries of a newly formed Iraq. An "amusing game" she called it, while sitting in her Baghdad office, carefully drawing a wide red line around the north, and thus determining the future of the Kurds.

But Desert Queen reduces this complex life to a tale we have read many times before. Frustrated spinster seeks solace in the desert sands. Distance is the only way to escape the restraints of British society and heal the wounds of forbidden love. "Travel," writes Wallach, "would let her break free."

Wallach, an American, is most taken by the institutions of Britain, from the Empire to Oxford colleges, and Bell, a product of them all, is inevitably an object of her admiration.

Bell herself would have tolerated no such gush. People — whether servants, monarchs or administrators — were her faith, neither Empire nor any nascent ideology of Arab independence, although she has been accused of both.

Wallach turns this pragmatist into a philosopher, a lover of all things Arab. It is a tempting portrait. But whether it in any way approximates to the truth is another matter. The person who emerges from the heat-hazed sands of Desert Queen is as much a wish as a real woman.

A journey without end

Ian Thomson

The Odyssey: Homer
Translated by Robert Fagles
Introduction and notes
by Bernard Knox
Viking 541pp £25

THERE are showrooms all over Britain named after Odysseus's dog, Argos. Homer gets everywhere. A North London street boasts an Odyssey Dryclean and a Ulysses 2000 Menswear. (Ulysses is the Latin form of Odysseus's name.) Ajax is better known as a washing powder than as the warrior who committed suicide after his defeat by Odysseus. Our culture is littered with other, more obscure Homericisms.

The Odyssey comes down to us from the dawn of Western literature. But the first printed edition appeared as late as 1488 in Florence. There have been thousands of English translations of The Odyssey, passing from generation to generation changed and enriched.

Robert Fagles's new verse translation has echoes of Pope, as well as of E V Rieu's great prose version of 1946. It triumphantly restores the poem to its Hellenic toughness. The Odyssey unfolds in a real world of rawhide sandals, brine-soaked mariners and bronze shinguards. As Ezra Pound said, Homer had an "ear for the sea-surge", and Fagles captures it superbly in images of dripping oarblades and pitchers of shining wine.

In his homesick exile, separated by 20 years from his wife Penelope after destroying Troy, Odysseus bears the hardest trials and solitude. He is a domestic creature who longs for the marriage bed he built himself out of olive-tree roots. For James Joyce, Odysseus was the most complete character in Western literature. He based the wanderings round Dublin of the homely Leopold Bloom on those of Odysseus, the fallible King of Ithaca.

A very different image of Odysseus comes through Dante, who saw the Greek hero as a restless wanderer sailing over the brink into the unknown. The same theme of wanderlust was taken up by Tennyson, who imagined a Ulysses dreaming of new frontiers. In the 1960s, Eric Clapton clearly knew his Homer. Tales Of Brave Ulysses, on Cream's psychedelic Disraeli Gears album, rhapsodises the "Sirens sweetly singing". Thurber even envisioned a Disney Odyssey — surprisingly never made.

In the course of his adventures, Odysseus is forced to go down into the Kingdom of the Dead. Homer's picture of the underworld became the model for all later Western geographies of Hell, most particularly Dante's.

William Morris evoked Odysseus as "the Shifty". He is the hero of many wiles (polymetis), the hoaxer of the Trojan horse. Surely this, too, endears Odysseus to the modern reader. He is no shining paragon of aristocratic virtue (or not only that): Odysseus is a sweet deceiver, well versed in the art of disguise.

The Odyssey is not an endangered species from the groves of academe. It's a superb story which has been enjoyed by millions. Reading it, Samuel Beckett recovered "something of the oldchildish absorbtion [sic] with which I read Treasure Island and Oliver Twist". Nowadays, of course, the word Homer immediately brings to mind the father in The Simpsons. But Fagles's translation is no dreary classics lesson; it breathes fantastic new life into an ancient adventure.

Sports Diary Mike Kiely

Robson steps down

UNSEASONAL downpours that left most Britons cursing the heavens for disrupting the first week of Wimbledon were as nothing to the dampener put on Bobby Robson's latest triumph with Barcelona which only served to confirm that the reign in Spain can be intense if decidedly brief.

In 12 months with the Catalan giants, the former England manager has carried off the European Cup Winners' Cup and finished a respectable second in the national league. And, at the weekend, his team beat Real Betis 3-2 after extra-time in the Spanish Cup final. Robson's reward was the confirmation that he will be replaced by former Ajax coach Louis van Gaal and instead take on the role of director of recruitment: "The job will be a mixture of many things, partly ambassadorial, partly honorary," he said.

One former England coach enjoying better fortunes away from home is Terry Venables. His Australian side beat New Zealand 3-0 in the first leg of the World Cup Oceania zone play-off in Auckland.

On the home front, Everton finally got their man when Howard Kendall agreed to become the club's manager for the third time, while Manchester United signed England striker Teddy Sheringham from Manchester United for $5.8 million.

Brazil beat Bolivia 3-1 to win the Copa America but fared less well in the World Youth Championships in Malaysia, losing 2-0 to holders Argentina, who had earlier beaten England in the quarter finals. Ireland will join Argentina in the semi-finals, having beaten Spain 1-0.

HM THE Queen may be left kicking her heels come the turn of the century after reports from Australia suggested that the International Olympic Committee has agreed to break with tradition and allow a political leader rather than the head of state to open the 2000 Games in Sydney.

On the track, Olympic glory seemed a distant memory for American Michael Johnson, winner of the 200 metres and 400 metre titles in Atlanta last year. In the 400 metres event in the Meeting Gaz de France in Paris, Johnson finished only fifth, ending an unbeaten run at that distance stretching back eight years and 58 races. In Sheffield, Donovan Bailey defeated Linford Christie over 150 metres.

SOUTH AFRICAN Retief Goosen overcame persistent interruptions because of rain to win the French Open at Versailles and pocket $160,000.

AUSTRALIAN Michael Doohan won the Dutch 500cc grand prix in Assen, his sixth triumph of the current season, extending his lead to 68 points over Honda team-mate Alex Criville.

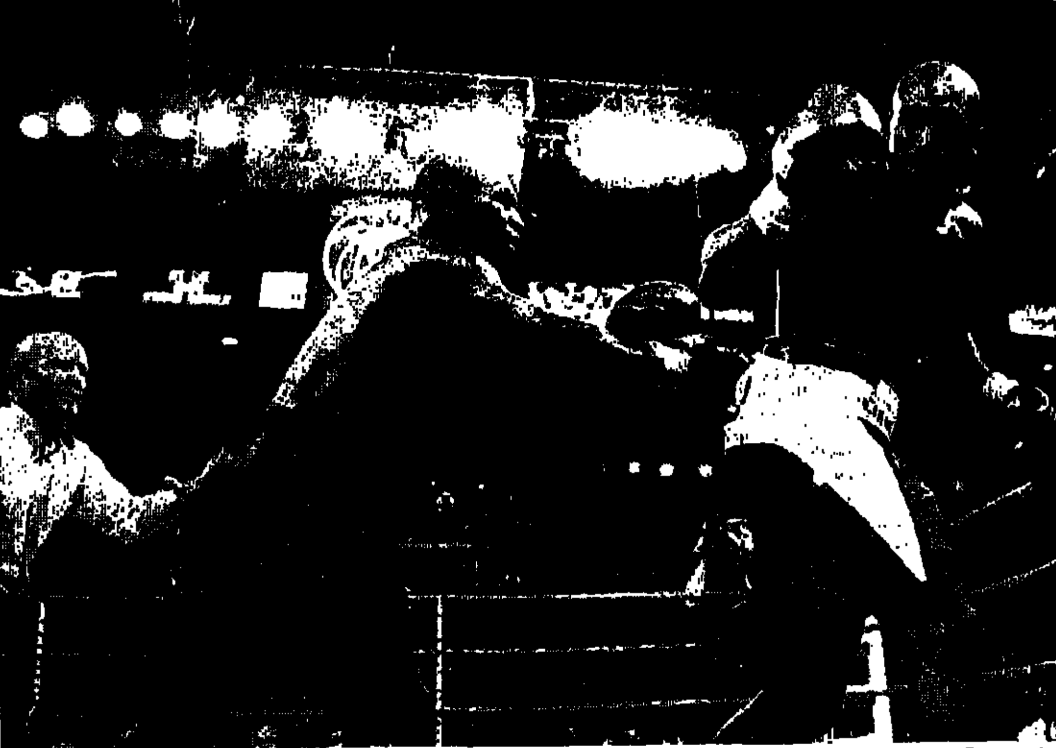
RORY UNDERWOOD, the most capped British rugby union player and England's leading try scorer, has been released by Leicester. His career included six appearances for the Lions and 134 tries in 236 appearances for his club.

NATWEST Trophy holders Lancashire secured a 169-run victory over Berkshire at Old Trafford as the first round of this year's competition saw the élite dispatch their colleagues from the Minor Counties with relative ease. Northamptonshire came closest to losing their dignity after setting Cumberland 224 to win. But a five-wicket spell from Tony Penberthy left the minnows 37 runs short of their target.

England's squad for the Third Test against Australia at Old Trafford is: Atherton, Butcher, Stewart, Hussain, Thorpe, Crawley, Ealham, Croft, Gough, Caddick, Malcolm, Headley, Smith, Tufnell.

BRITISH fighter Herbie Hide dispatched Tony Tucker in the second round of the WBO world heavyweight title fight at Norwich to regain the crown he lost in 1995 to Riddick Bowe.

Shiv Sharma is on holiday



Once bitten . . . Mike Tyson pushes Evander Holyfield in the back after referee Mills Lane tried to break up the two during their WBC world heavyweight title fight in Las Vegas. Tyson was disqualified at the end of the third round after biting Holyfield on both ears PHOTOGRAPH: JED JACOBSOHN

Tennis Wimbledon

Henman raises the roof

Stephen Bierley

TIM HENMAN may not become the Wimbledon champion this year, but there was no doubt that he was the champion of the people last Sunday when he beat Holland's Paul Haarhuis 14-12 in the fifth set.

A first week devastated by heavy rain resulted in the tournament's second ever People's Sunday, when more than 30,000 tennis fans (note that word) paid at the gate. However, it was in danger of being throttled at source by this year's security clampdown. The logjam eventually cleared, however, and massive was the collective enjoyment.

Henman's 6-7, 6-3, 6-2, 4-6 14-12 victory owed much to an animated wall of support that greeted his every winner. He might easily have lost a titanic third-round match against the Dutch player that lasted nearly four hours had not the crowd almost lifted him off his feet with their support.

Haarhuis, nine years older than the 22-year-old Henman and ranked 63rd, can never have experienced anything like this on the circuit. When he lost his serve in the eighth game of the first set the noise was almost unbearable.

To his immense credit Haarhuis held his nerve and broke back, Henman missing three set points. He was to miss three more in the tie-break and suddenly it appeared the impassioned support might work against him.

So much depends on Henman's first serve. When it is in the groove, he plays a classical melody; when it is off, his whole game can quickly become scratchy and flat. He might easily have fretted over losing the tie-break; instead his game improved radically, notably his service, and it was Haarhuis who looked suddenly frail and worried.

The second and third sets rushed past the Dutchman like a mean easterly over the polders. He seemed to shrink and shrivel as Henman seized on his every error. Then two poor backhand volleys gave Haarhuis the sniff of an opening early in the fourth set, and suddenly he had levelled the match.

Haarhuis was now playing the more measured, solid tennis and Henman's serve again appeared suspect. But his nerve held until a mishit return by the Dutchman was smashed into the net by the Briton to give Haarhuis a 4-3 lead which he extended on his own serve.

It was at this point that the crowd almost burst a gasket to get their man back, and so he did. Haarhuis, the pressure piling so heavily down on his head that it almost drilled him into the turf, double faulted on match point, double faulted again, and then netted a volley.

Incredibly, almost impossibly, Henman was free at 5-5. There was hardly a hint thereafter of him letting things slide away again and ultimately Haarhuis cracked. Henman's opponent in the fourth round, champion Richard Krajicek, made short work of David Rikl while Greg Rusedski recovered from the biggest ordeal of his career last Saturday to win 6-3, 6-4, 6-4 the next day against Andrew Richardson.

On the Saturday an injury-hampered start had led Rusedski into a frightening two-set deficit against Jonathan Stark, and a consuming rage at line decisions had helped push him to the brink of defeat. Two emotionally exhausting recoveries, however, made it the match of the tournament so far.

Certainly Rusedski had never before recovered from two sets down. It required him to keep going through 10 more games before putting together, on match point, the combination of a dipping return and a cleverly angled forehand pass which turned No 1 Court into a patriotic bedlam. American Richey Reneberg awaited him in the next round.

There are no seeds left in Rusedski's quarter of the draw. Wayne Ferreira went out last Sunday following the losses of both Carlos Moya and Goran Ivanisevic 24 hours earlier.

On Monday, No 1 seed Pete Sampras secured a fourth-round match after defeating Zimbabwe's Byron Black 6-1, 6-2, 6-2. Other third round victors were Yevgeny Kafelnikov, Boris Becker and Australia's Pat Rafter.

In the women's competition, the second week got off to an exciting start with the departure of Monica Seles, beaten 0-6, 6-4, 8-6 by Sandrine Testud of France. Meanwhile last Sunday, it became certain that a new name would be engraved on the trophy after the 1994 champion Conchita Martinez, who had been the only former champion to survive the first six days, lost 6-4, 6-4 to Helena Sukova.

Martina Hingis, the No 1 seed, beat Nicole Arendt 6-1, 6-3 in an hour. Hingis, aged only 16, was asked whether she would regret never playing Steffi Graf if the German did not return following the injury which kept her out of this year's competition. "No," she said. "She had a great career but mine is just beginning while hers is almost over. So I don't really care."

Anna Kournikova, the 16-year-old Russian, ensured that only half the women's seeds survived into the second week when she beat Germany's Anke Huber, ranked seventh. As with Martinez, the defeat of Amanda Coetzer, the sixth seed, was a matter of demise more than surprise. Last Sunday she never showed she had the game for grass and was dispatched 6-2, 6-1 by a player more than 50 places below her, the Cambodian-born Canadian Patricia Hy-Boulais.



Henman . . . crowd pleaser

Rugby Union Second Test South Africa 15 Lions 18

Hail the pride of Lion hearts

Robert Armstrong in Durban

IAN McGEECHAN, in his moment of triumph as the Lions' coach, reaffirmed the collective nature of the tourists' Test success at King's Park last Saturday but he might well agree that Neil Jenkins, more than any other player, made the difference when it was time to close out the series against the Springboks.

Jeremy Guscott certainly earned a footnote in rugby history with his match-winning drop goal four minutes from time, yet it was the Wales full-back who laid the foundation for an epic victory with five penalty goals from five attempts.

If one examines Jenkins's performances over the first two Tests the statistics are even more impressive: add on his five penalty goals in Cape Town and he has kicked 30 of his side's aggregate 43 points. That achievement comes in stark contrast to the Springboks' pattern of scoring.

Last Saturday they crossed for three more tries, making it five in the two games, yet their goalkickers failed to add a single conversion and managed only two penalty goals in the first encounter.

In other words the Springboks succeeded in playing most of the attacking rugby, yet lost the series because they kept making basic errors and were unable to match the Lions' remarkable discipline in defence. Crucially South Africa lacked a goalkicker of even modest competence, hence the total of 15 points that Henry Honiball, Percy Montgomery and Andre Joubert left on the floor.

McGeechan has now earned an indisputable place in the pantheon of Test rugby with two series victories in the southern hemisphere to his name; his 1989 Lions won 2-1 in Australia.

Seeing off South Africa, with the third Test at Ellis Park still to come on Saturday, represents an extraordinary comeback for the Northampton club's director of rugby, who has won only the Courage League Two title since 1990 when, with Scotland, he achieved the Five Nations Grand Slam.

In both South Africa Tests the 32-year-old Guscott was largely anonymous — last Saturday he tended to lose the ball in the tackle — but the Bath centre has the priceless ability to turn a game with an inspired decision.

The fact that he was the only player on the field to have shared McGeechan's three Lions tours is an eloquent tribute to his unique contribution to British rugby over the past nine years.

The history of Lions tours is littered with missed opportunities and hard-luck stories, so not even the Springboks would waste time dwelling on the six missed kicks for goal that cost them the second Test.

Brothers in arms . . . The Lions players wrapped in celebration after defeating the Springboks PHOTOGRAPH: ALEX LIVESEY

Their defeats by New Zealand last year mean the world champions have now lost two Test series in succession, an experience that would normally create a profound crisis of confidence were it not for the dynamism and ambition of much of their play here.

In the unforgiving arena of Test rugby, scoring more points than the opposition is ultimately all that really matters: the Lions will, therefore, lose no sleep over the fact that they never threatened a try in the whole 80 minutes whereas the Springboks might have scored five or six.

The indefatigable Jenkins rescued them three times from potentially terminal damage with try-saving interventions after Honiball had sent chip-kicks rolling into dangerous areas.

Strangely enough the Lions, having cut down several provincial sides with a fusillade of tries, seemed happy to stay on the back foot and occasionally make thunderous hits on their opponents that drew gasps of admiration from the 50,000 crowd. Scott Gibbs gave another awesome demonstration of hard, offensive tackling — one bone-cruncher on the prop Os du Randt will live in the memory — and Tim Rodber was also up to speed when it came to making dents in Springbok hides.

In reality the Lions had little option but to play as they did, given the unrelenting pressure of the Springbok pack. Jeremy Davidson again made a huge impact at the line-out and Gregor Townsend made a number of spirited breaks but mostly the Lions were reduced to masterly scavengers, improvising on every awkward scrap of possession that came their way.

Near the end, for example, the hooker Keith Wood hacked out of a ruck and the ball ran 40 metres down the touchline to put the tourists in an attacking position they had done little to earn. But such fiery opportunism kept them in the hunt.

The Springboks seized control with three splendidly worked tries in a 20-minute period either side of half-time. In the 35th minute Joost van der Westhuizen plundered a short-range score from the base of a ruck; at the start of the second half Danie van Schalkwyk sent Montgomery away for a try on the right after Honiball had intercepted a careless pass by Alan Tait; and in the 55th minute Honiball sent a long miss-pass to Joubert, who rounded John Bentley and Jenkins on his way to the left flag.

Even so the Springboks held a precarious 15-9 lead going into the final quarter — the sort of situation the smash-and-grab Lions clearly relished.

When Jenkins levelled the scores with penalty goals from 40 and 30 metres the omens suggested a dramatic upset was about to unfold, and there was an air of inevitability about Guscott's sweetly timed drop goal after a ruck in the left corner. In the end nothing became the Lions so much as their talent for grand larceny.

● Tony Stanger, involved in Scotland's tour of South Africa, was drafted into the Lions party for the final week as cover for the injured Ieuan Evans and Will Greenwood.

Motor Racing French Grand Prix

Ferrari on track for title

Alan Henry at Magny-Cours

FERRARI's Michael Schumacher took a decisive stride towards celebrating the Italian team's 50th racing anniversary with their first world drivers' title for 19 years when he gave another flawless performance in the rain-affected French Grand Prix. Last Sunday's victory at the Circuit de Nevers was the German's third win of the 1997 season after his recent successes at Monaco and Montreal.

When a heavy shower transformed the track surface into a skating rink in the closing stages of the 72-lap race, Schumacher displayed dazzling car control by remaining out on the circuit on his dry-weather slick tyres. Even a momentary slide into a gravel trap hardly dented the double world champion's advantage, and his 23-second victory over Heinz-Harald Frentzen's Williams-Renault boosted his points total to 47 — 14 ahead of the pre-season favourite Jacques Villeneuve, who scrambled his Williams home fourth after spinning wildly on the final corner of the race as he tried to wrest third place from Eddie Irvine's Ferrari.

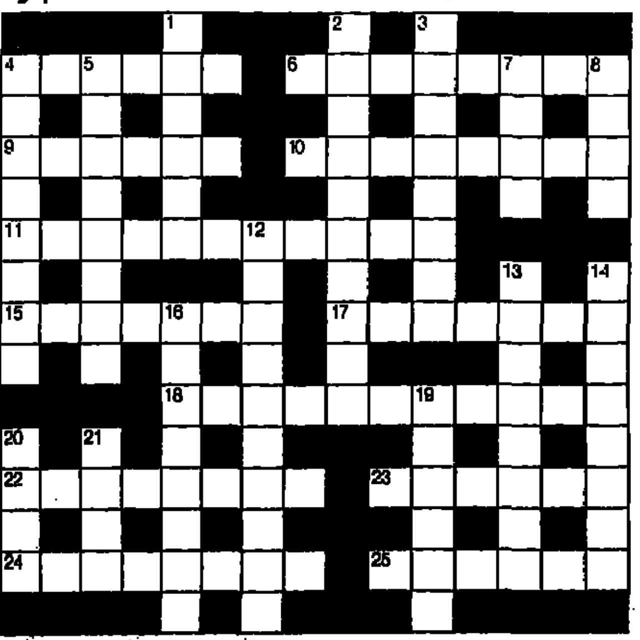
"It was always going to be a two-stop strategy and we stuck to that," said Schumacher. "Apart from my trip into the gravel when the rain came near the finish I was able to control the race throughout."

After the race, Villeneuve was called in front of the stewards to explain his behaviour on the final corner. David Coulthard, who had gone into the final lap heading for fourth place, was also looking for explanations, having ended the afternoon stuck in a gravel trap after Jean Alesi's Benetton had driven into the back of his McLaren-Mercedes, ramming the Scot off the circuit. Villeneuve slipped ahead of Alesi in the ensuing scramble.

"It was totally unacceptable," said Coulthard. "I would go and have a word with him but I don't think there would be any point. He wouldn't take any notice."

Damon Hill, who had won this race last year for the Williams team as commandingly as Schumacher's Ferrari dominated it last Sunday, qualified in a dismal 17th position and then compounded his disappointment by sliding through a gravel trap at the first turn. The world champion was forced to come in for a new nose section at the end of the opening lap. Thereafter his Arrows ran slowly and reliably through to finish 12th and last, three laps behind Schumacher's victorious Ferrari.

Cryptic crossword by Janus



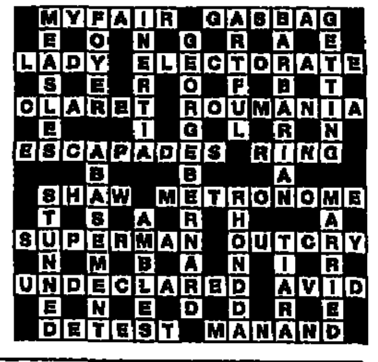
Across

4 Party chief's territory (6)
6 Faults to do with receivers (8)
9 Boy getting over ten for poem (6)
10 Old Italian in wild canter round America (8)
11 Compromise on musical adaptation (11)
15 Bird-house in river-bed (7)
17 Where answer is to follow role-model (7)
18 Horse for Miss Senegal? (5,6)
22 Is unhappy about the lady's fruit (8)
23 American deer (it has one paw reversed) (6)
24 Wrecker's crafty ruse to encompass boat's destruction (8)
25 Container that is standard, with no variation (6)

Down

1 Soldier outdone by Bible man (6)
2 Extricated from dilemma near the Dutch coast (3,3,4)
3 Refutation of a person ridiculed in Lear? (8)
4 Breaks up underworld rings (8)
5 Tree found in island wood (8)
7 Shrub uprooted by some peacocks (4)
8 Audible indication of mathematical function (4)
12 *Additional one thrown over us is not essential* (10)
13 Fertilising football team arena (8)
14 Says perhaps rain must fall on Sennacherib for example (8)
16 They entertain diners by putting nude in show (8)
19 Make it feasible to measure irregular bale (6)
20 Performs by the book (4)
21 Some may grow it in another border (4)

Last week's solution



© Guardian Publications Ltd., 1996. Published by Guardian Publications Ltd., 164 Deansgate, Manchester, M60 2RR, and printed by WCP Commercial Printing, Leek.
Second class postage paid at New York, N.Y., and mailing offices. Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office.